ΑΥΤΟΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΤΟΣ.

OR, THE

SINNER

Condemned of Himself:

BEING

A Plea for God, against all the Ungodly, proving them alone guilty of their own Destruction; and that they shall be Condemned in the great Day of Account, not for that they lacked, but only because they neglected the means of their Salvation.

And also,

Shewing, how fallacious and frivolous a Pretence it is in any, to say, They would do better, if they could; when indeed all men could, and might do better, if they would.

By One, that wisheth better to All; than most do to themselves.

Hos. 13. 9. *O* Israel, *thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help.*

Ezech. 33. 20. *O ye House of* Israel, *I will judge you every one after his wayes.*

Οὐκ ἔστιν ὀδεὶς εἰς ψυχὴν ἀδικούμενος, ἐὰν μὴ ἡμεῖς ἑαυτοὺς εἰς ψυχὴν ἀδικήσωμεν. Chrysost. Ἀνδριάντ. κα'.

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The PREFACE.

WE are all by nature, as much inclin'd to hide and excuſe Sin, as we are to commit it. Sin and Shifting (as one ſaith well and truly) came into the World together: And we have drawn both alike, from the loynes of our firſt Parents. No ſooner had they ſinn'd, but they hid themſelves: And no ſooner had God found them out, but they fell to excuſe themſelves. The Man puts the fault upon the Woman: And ſhe again turns it over to the Serpent. Yea, (as *Calvin* and others obſerve upon *Gen.* 3. 12.) *Adam* ſpared not to charge God

Gen. 3.

Neq; hoc contentus Deum ſimul accipit in crimen, &c.

God himself, by saying, *The Woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* As much as if he should have said, *If thou hadst left me alone, as I was, I had never done as I did.*

Now among all those many inventions, which men have fought out, to excuse themselves in their sins, this is one, and a chief one, *viz.* That they never had Light enough to convince them, that their way was not good before God. They confess, their Ministers have cryed out against them, and often passed sentence upon them, as men running headlong to their own destruction: But they never met with such Ministers, as had Arguments strong enough to perswade them to alter and change their way. Had this

been

been once done to the purpoſe, there had been no more adoe; They ſhould ſoon have amended all, that others knew to be amiſs. But in this the Miniſters are ſtill wanting, and ſo long as they are ſo, they have reaſon (as they think) for what they do. For themſelves, they are good natur'd, and well diſpos'd, and their endeavour hath been, and ſtill is, to do their utmoſt, ſo as if there be a fault, they know not how to help it, the blame muſt lye ſomewhere elſe. They love God with all their hearts, and labour (what in them lieth) to keep his Commandments, repenting every day with hearty ſorrow, for all they have done amiſs. Indeed, they meet with many hindrances, ſo as they cannot do as they would. But ſo long as they are willing,

well minded, they are confident God will bear with them, though they cannot make so fair a shew, nor flourish it, as some Professors, who (as they think) in their doings and dealings are none of the best. Having these, or the like perswasions, they keep up an inveterate prejudice against all pretences to more circumspect and precise walking, such as the Apostle adviseth, *Eph.* 5. 15, 16. and bless themselves in their own hearts, promising rest and peace to their Souls, even when they walk after their own devices, because they do (as they perswade themselves) the best they can, and would with all their hearts do better, if they could.

Now, that which is intended in this ensuing Discourse, is to de-

demonstrate, That all these are fallacious pretences, and that there is no want of means and helps to their Conviction and Conversion, but they have Light enough, which they suppress, and keep under, as the *Gentiles* did, *Ro.* 1. 18. and out of a desire to satisfie their fleshly lusts, refuse to follow whither Scripture and Reason lead them.

For their Quarrels and Exceptions, they are like those of the *Jews*, in our Saviours time. *Why dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* *What Sign shewest thou, that we may see, and believe?* As if they wanted nothing but Light, to see, whether he was the *Messias* indeed. If they could once be assured of that, they needed not to be perswaded

Joan. 10. 24.

Joan 6. 30.

swaded any further, he should have Disciples and Followers enough. Yet none of us (I hope) will say of those *Jews*, They had not Light enough, when the Sun of Righteousness arose to shine upon them. Nor dare we (I suppose) excuse them, notwithstanding all their exceptions from the guilt of crucifying the Lord of Glory. And then, how can any of us look on our selves, as more excusable than they?

Hereupon all they, who retain so good an opinion of themselves, and are alwayes questioning and quarrelling others, that are dealing with them, for the good of their Souls, (just as the *Jews* did our Saviour) might do well to enquire, Whether the same Spirit of contradiction be not in them, that

that was in those Jews. To pick Quarrels, and make Objections, and put others to answer them, is no hard work for any to do, that have a mind to it. But to do the Will of God, as he requires it to be done, is hard work to flesh and blood, and calls for Self-denial, and renouncing our own Wills. And what if this be it, and nothing else, that lieth at the bottom of all those fair pretences, which are made by many, of their being not convinced and satisfied in their Judgements and Consciences, about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and their own Salvation. Wherefore they should consider more seriously, Whether he that searcheth the hearts, and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, do not see, they pretend one thing, and mean another;

ther; and whites they like not the Light that shines to them, they would fain excuse it, by saying, They have not Light enough.

Wherefore I would fain perswade all, to have no such good opinion of themselves, but rather to search and try their hearts and wayes, till they discern and discover that enmity which is in them against the righteous & holy Wills of God. For the Apostle resolves, Rom. 8. 7. That such a root of bitterness there is in all men by nature, and he that knows any thing of himself, cannot be ignorant of it. I say again therefore, Let no man bless himself in a fond conceit (no better than a sick mans dream) of the goodness of his own heart. For so long as men do this, they do but lock and bolt

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up all the passages of their Souls, that nothing God doth or saith, can have entrance into them, or make any impression upon them. These are farr from judging themselves, or justifying God; But say in effect, as *Israel* of old, *Ezech.* 18. 25. *The way of the Lord is not equall.* These men are indeed far from righteousness, and wholly indispos'd to learn it. Their Souls are as some old Sores, so nasty and filthy, as they must be wash'd and wip'd, before any healing Plaisters can be laid on them. Or as some mens Bodies, so foul, and full of bad humours, as they must have Preparatives, to make way for the intended Medicines, which otherwise will have no efficacy or operation. Now this Discourse is intended only as a Preparative, to make way for other Physick,

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by rowsing men up to consider, in what a condition they are, and that there is an enmity in them against God, and his Laws; and that this enmity is it, which causes so many disputes and exceptions about Gods Dispensations of Grace and Providence; and that they do but flatter and deceive their own Souls, in thinking themselves so well inclin'd to God and goodness, and should do well enough, if they had some-what, which they want (as they think) without any fault of their own. For what hope is there, to perswade men out of their ungodly wayes, so long as they conceit themselves to lye under a fatal necessity of being as they are, and so it is no fault of theirs, that they are no better? Or how shall men be prevail'd

with,

with, to change their course, so long as they lye under such gross mistakes of God, and his wayes, as to think, he is wanting to them, and they are not wanting to themselves? Such mistakes do a great deal of mischief in the World, and keep up cursed prejudices in the hearts of men, against the wayes of Gods Commandments, and make them to cry Peace to their Souls, even whiles they are walking after their own imaginations, and running head-long to the pit of destruction.

Now this Discourse be-speaks men, to consider, Whether Gods wayes, or their own, are unequal; and whether God or they shall be justified in the last and great day of account.

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There needs no more to be said in way of Preface: That the God of all Grace, will vouchsafe to give his Spirit, for convincing men of all their Mistakes and Prejudices; so as they may learn to judge themselves, and justify him, (which is the work they have to do, in order to their Salvation) is the hearty Desire and Prayer of him that penn'd, and them that publish'd this ensuing Treatise.

T. F.

ΑΥΤΟΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΤΟΣ;
OR
The Sinner Condemned of Himself.

WHat the Apostle saith of an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition, may truly be said of every one that goeth on in his wickedness, *He Sinneth being condemned of himself:* He sinneth wilfully, and without excuse, he hath no cloak for his sin; for he condemns himself in what he doth, in that his practise is contrary to his principle. Tit. 3. 10, 11.

That this is the case of all, or most ungodly Sinners, I shall endeavour to make good in the ensuing Treatise. And in order thereunto, I shall lay down the summe and substance of all, in one general Proposition, which I offer, as the conclusion to be proved, *viz.*

That, whatever excuses or pretences, are or may be made by any, all the mistakes, and miscarriages of men, about the matters of Gods Kingdome, and their own Salvation, are only, and altogether from their not improving the means, and helps, which are allowed them; and that this also is only from the sinful corruption, and cursed inbred enmity of their own hearts and nature. The general proposition to be proved.

1 Argument. To prove this, I argue, first from somewhat implyed in the Proposition it self, *viz.* The sufficiency of helps and means on Gods part allow'd to men. And

The Argument may be formed thus:

If God have sufficiently provided for mens Salvation, so as he is not wanting in what lay on him to do, then mens neglect is the only cause of their destruction.

But God hath sufficiently provided, *&c.*

Ergo, &c.

Here I shall not stand to prove the consequence of the first Proposition, because if God be not, of necessity man only must be wanting to himself. If any shall alledge, that the world, the flesh, and the Devil are great enemies, and hinderances to mens Salvation, I grant it, but deny withall, that therefore God is to be charg'd with mens destruction, or that any man who dieth in his sins, is the more excusable. For the fault is in men only, that they willingly give themselves up to be led aside by those enemies of their Souls, and so neglect their own Salvation. Sure I am, nor one, nor all of those enemies, could prejudice our everlasting estate, if we did not freely and willingly give our selves over to their power.

And this will appear in my proving the second Proposition, *viz.* That God hath sufficiently provided for mens Salvation, *&c.*

Here, I shall first instance in particulars, and therein shew, what provision God hath made.

1. To rise no higher than *Adams* fall, when man

man ſtood in moſt need of Gods help, was there not a ſpeedy proviſion made of an allſufficient Saviour, and help laid upon one that was mighty, *and able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by him?* Heb. 7.25. No ſooner had God convinced our firſt Parents of their ſin and miſery, but he preſently revealed his Son, to be made the ſeed of the woman, and Gen. 3.15. in mans nature to fulfill whatever was needfull to the reconciling of the world. In this Salvation ſo prepar'd, and promis'd, there was no defect, as appears by the Apoſtles teſtimony, *Heb.* 7.25. The only defect is on mans part, in not coming to God through Chriſt, that he may be ſaved. Who dare ſay, that God hath made but a ſcanty proviſion for our ſalvation? Surely it cannot ſtand with his faithfulneſs and goodneſs, *who commands all men every where to repent.* Would he (think you) invite ſo many gueſts, if he knew not before hand, that there is entertainment enough for them all? No man (for ought I have heard) ever made queſtion of this, That if all would come to Chriſt, all ſhould be ſaved by him. And this is the tenour of the Goſpel-Covenant, (which alone reveals the way of Salvation) *He that beleiveth ſhall be ſaved*, &c. *Mar.* 16. 16. For any Objection that may be made, I ſhall anſwer it in its due place. Act. 7.30.

2. As God hath provided an allſufficient ſalvation, ſo hath he alſo allowed ſufficient means for the applying of it, ſo as it may be effectual.

1. There is the word of Grace, or the Goſ-

pel full and clear in all particulars, so as there is nothing necessary to be known concerning this salvation, but a man may run and read it. What was sufficiently discovered in the Old Testament, according to the dispensation of God for those times, is more clearly revealed in the New; so as we may well say with the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 3. 25. *The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto Salvation.*

2. There is the Spirit to teach us inwardly and in the heart, what is laid before our eyes in the word. And both these are promised, *Isa.* 59. 21. If any object, That that promise is made only to the Church, I may grant it, and yet answer well enough thus; That the Word and Spirit promised to the Church, proclaim and offer Christ to the world; and they that are without, are bound to receive what is offer'd, and to joyn themselves to the Church. For what is it that makes and constitutes the Church? Is it not hearkning to, and obeying the voice of God in his Word? There is the sound of the Gospels voice, which the world is bound to hearken to, as I hope to shew hereafter. And if the wicked world refuse, and will not enquire after it, that is their own fault, and God is not wanting, as shall be more fully clear'd in its due place.

For present it may suffice, that there is an abundance of the Spirit, and of the Word, enough to enlighten and enliven all the world if they would heed and attend them. Who dare say, that Gods Word and Spirit are not sufficient to instruct us in all things necessary

and to lead us into all truth? For Papists quarrelling the sufficiency of Scripture-revelation, I have nothing to do with it now; it serves my turn, if it be acknowledged, that God hath made a sufficient revelation of his will, and the way of our Salvation.

3. That God might not leave himself without many witnesses, we have also the work of Creation, that shews us the way of glorifying him; else how could the Apostle upon this one ground, prove the Gentiles to be inexcusable in their Idolatries? *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. And is there not also a goodness of God in his providential dispensations, that leads men to repentance? *Rom.* 2. 4. Yes, the Psalmist shews it at large, *Psal.* 107. And this amongst others seems to be one thing, that's very observable in that Psalm, *viz.* That men otherwise void of all piety, and such as care little for Gods company at other times, when distresses, and dangers assault them, even by nature, and natural conscience, are led to call upon God. This shews sufficiently, that their neglect of God in times of prosperity, is a stifling the natural principles of Religion, implanted in all men, for the improvement of divine providences. Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3.

4. To say no more, God hath made us reasonable creatures, and given us a minde to understand, so as to chuse the good, and refuse the evil. And have we not all of us a conscience to accuse and excuse, to encourage us in that which is good, and affright us from all that is evil? In one word, The way of Life is laid before us, and we have eyes to see it, if we had

a minde to walk in it. Men do not go to Hell as a beast goeth to the slaughter-house, or as one led blindfolded, not knowing whither he goeth, but they refuse the way of Life, and chuse the ways of Death; as I hope to shew hereafter more at large.

Now let me summe up all that hath been said, and thus argue; If God hath prepared an all-sufficient salvation, and provided all means necessary for the applying of it, what have we to complain of more, than what we finde in our selves? May not the Lord say as he did, *Isa. 5. 4. What could have been done more, that I have not done?* or as *Jer. 2. 5. What iniquity have you found in me?* Have I been wanting to you? Rather, have not you wronged your selves, and been sinners against your own Souls? And will not the Lord say thus one day? Questionless he will; else how shall he clear himself in condemning the wicked world? For suppose God to be wanting in any thing necessary on his part for our salvation, may not a condemned sinner justly reply thus? Lord thou hast now past'd the sentence of death upon me, and thou art now sending me to dwell with everlasting burnings, which I should never have run my self into, if thou hadst done that which lay upon thee to do. May not such a soul say, alas! I knew nothing of what I should have known in order to my salvation, but was left in the dark without any light to shew me the way of Life. Had God done his part, I might have done mine, and so it had never been with me as now it is. Shall any of the damned (think you)

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ever have cauſe, or juſt occaſion to quarrel God in this manner? Or if any ſhould, I muſt confeſs, I know not how to clear God in his condemning the world of the ungodly.

But God will certainly clear himſelf one day, *and convince all the ungodly*, that their damnation is juſt: Elſe why is God ſo often clearing himſelf upon all occaſions, from having any hand in the deſtruction of thoſe that periſh? For certain God would never clear himſelf (as often he doth) if he knew not himſelf to be clear; and he muſt have moſt unworthy thoughts of God that thinks otherwiſe. God is not as man, to juſtifie himſelf in any thing, but what is right and true. Jude 15.

Now, how often doth God clear himſelf, and caſt all the blame of mens deſtruction upon themſelves? Ezech. 18. 31, 32. *Caſt away all your tranſgreſſions*, &c. *for why will you die? I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth.* Hoſ. 13. 8. *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.* To this purpoſe alſo read *Eſay* 5. *v.* 1, 4.

Obj. But ſome will reply and ſay, Who denies or queſtions this? you labour to little purpoſe, and might well have ſpared this pains.

Sol. To clear my ſelf, give me leave to ſay; 1. That many are charg'd with making God the author of ſin, and the contriver (in a ſort) of mans damnation. I do not ſay they are juſtly charg'd, but that ſome are ſo charg'd by others, is moſt true.

2. There are but too many in the world, who charge God fooliſhly as faulty and guilty of mens deſtruction. I ſay not, they do it ex-

expreſly, and *in terminis*, but interpretatively, and by conſequence they ſay, that the fault is on Gods part, and not on theirs, if they die and are damn'd. What elſe is their meaning, when they pretend, as they do, ſo much love and good liking to God, and the wayes of his Commandments? Are there not many that ſay in their hearts, and ſome upon occaſion with their mouths alſo, Far be it from us to hate God, or any of his wayes? God forbid that we ſhould procure to our ſelves the damnation of our own ſouls? Nay, they will not be well pleas'd with any other, that ſhall charge them for ſo doing. If others will believe them, they are as willing to be ſav'd, and as willing to walk in the way of Life and Salvation, as any man can wiſh them to be. But alas! what would you have of them? If they knew better, they ſhould do better; and for their part, they do the beſt they can, and as far as God gives them grace. Now, is not this in effect all one as to ſay, if we are caſt away, and die in our ſins, it is no fault of ours? How could we help it? We have done all that we were able to do, and ſhould with all our hearts have done more, if God had given us wherewithall. Is not this to quit our ſelves, and caſt all the blame upon God only? Yes; it is to charge it upon God alone, that we die and periſh in our ſins.

Now for the ſake of theſe, and ſuch as theſe I have undertaken to plead for God, as well as I can. For (to ſpeak as it is indeed) God is much ſpoken againſt in the world, and as there are too many of whom it may be ſaid, *God is not*

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in al their thoughts; or, *there is no God, is all their thought*, Pſal. 10. 4. ſo there are many mouths open'd againſt him, to charge him with all the fault of mens deſtruction. And I know not in my capacity, how to do him better ſervice, than to ſpeak a good word for him in this caſe, and let the world know it.

To return where we left before; I ſhall a little further, and more fully ſhew, that God is (if I may ſo ſay) exceeding carefull to clear himſelf of having any hand in the death of him that dieth: He thinks he hath done what was to be done on his part; *What could have been done more, that I have not done?* Eſay 5. 3, 4. As if he ſhould ſay, there wanted nothing to their being a fruitfull people, if they would themſelves. Conſider alſo what our Saviour ſaith, John 5. 40. *And* (or rather, *But*) *you will not come unto me, that you might have life.* Verſ. 39. he had told them, that the Scriptures teſtified of him, that he was the light and the life of men; *But* (ſaith he) *you will not come unto me that you may have life.* Is not that as much as to ſay, Here is life laid up in me all-ſufficient to all intents and uſes, and ſafe enough, but you will not come and take it, though you may have it only for the asking? If this be not the full purport and meaning of thoſe words, I cannot imagine what it ſhould be. For our Saviour ſpeaks plainly to them, that if they die in their ſins, 'tis not becauſe eternal life is not to be had, but becauſe they will not have it. And is not this enough to clear God, and condemn the unbelieving world? Adde to this that

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affectionate passage of our Saviour, Mat. 23. 37. *I would have gathered them as an hen gathereth her chickens, but they would not.* This clears him; and dare any man say or think, that our Saviour meant otherwise than he spake? O! how happy had that people been, if they had taken him at his word! Take one place more, *Luc.* 19. 41, 42. how pathetically he wishes, *If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!* Was it not in his heart (think you) that *Jerusalem* was the only cause of her destruction? And by all you may see, the Lord is willing to clear himself, and we may assure our selves he is as able to do it. He well knows, that all his dispensations of grace and providence are such, as will clear him against all the world. Our Saviour knew well (and hath not forgotten it to this day!) that when he was on earth, he was no way wanting to the work which his Father had put into his hands. And this appears *Esay* 49. 4. that God will justifie him, that it was not by any default of his, that his labours had no better successe; *His judgement is with the Lord, and his reward with his God.* He knew (and knows still) that he had done all that he had to do, for the reclaiming of his Countrymen, and for the reconciling of the world. Did the *Jews* want any means, whereby they might know him to be, as he was indeed, the promised *Messiah*? True, they thought so then, and were ever calling upon him for farther and fuller evidences; but they were but vain, and false pretences, somewhat the same, or very

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like to what others ſtill have, as I ſhall hereafter prove. But whatever they pretended then, I am confident they are now of another minde. Whiles men are on earth they have too good thoughts of themſelves, and are too apt to entertain hard thoughts of God, and his dealings with them. But I am apt to think, that the damned in Hell complain moſt of themſelves. Sure the Parable (ſome will have it a ſtory) *Luc.* 16. ſeems at leaſt to ſound this way: For though it ſore troubled the Rich-man to be in that place of torment, and fain would he have had ſome relief, though never ſo little, yet he complains of none beſide himſelf for his coming thither. One ſaith indeed, *That no man goes to Hell, but he hath ſome excuſe or pretence for it.* And I am of his minde in this, if he mean it of men, whiles they are upon earth. But I much queſtion, whether the damned, when once they arrive at their long home, be not forſaken of all thoſe pretences, and begin to change their minds: However it be (for I reſolve nothing in the caſe) the Rich-mans deſires for his brethren that ſurviv'd him, ſhew he thought, that while men are upon earth they may prevent their own damnation. And though he would have had ſome extraordinary way taken for the ſalvation of his brethren, yet *Abrahams* anſwer clears it beyond all queſtion, that they and others like them, have means enough if they will but uſe them; *They have Moſes and the Prophets*: And have not we moreover the Evangelills and the Apoſtles? Read *Luc.* 16. 31. and reſolve, if men

will

will not hear these, no extraordinary appearances will work upon them. Questionless *Abraham* in Heaven knew the truth, as well as the Rich-man in Hell. But for what may be said of strange providences, and the good effects of them in some, I shall have occasion to discourse hereafter.

Though what I have said might serve to clear God, as to his making sufficient provision of means, in order to mans Salvation, yet I may not yet lay aside this part of my task. For there lies a great Objection that is very obvious, and must be answer'd: The Objection arises from the forlorn condition of the *Gentiles*, whiles the partition-wall between them and the *Jews* stood firm; and the same Objection lies now as to *Pagans*, who are without God in the world. *Obj.* For it may be said, Since the *Gentiles* of old, and many now are denyed the ordinary means of grace, and saving knowledge; How can it be maintain'd, that there is a sufficient allowance of means on Gods part, and that no man hath cause to complain of any but himself.

Sol. In answering this Argument I have (I hope) the Apostle to help me, and he helps me to answer thus; That even those *Gentiles* who had not the written Law, (which the *Jews* had) *were without excuse*, Rom. 1. 20. Now if they be without excuse, there needs no more to clear Gods justice in their condemnation. But the Apostle proves what he saith, and shews why, and how they are without excuse, vers. 19. *Because that which may be known of God is manifest*

xifeſt in them; For God hath ſhewed it unto them, therefore they are without excuſe. Whatever ſerv'd to ſet forth the glory of God, or whatever might excite and move them to glorifie God, all this is manifeſt in them. And the ſame Interpreter thinks there is a ſpecial emphaſis in the Prepoſition [*In.*] It notes (ſaith *Calvin.*) ſuch a manifeſtation, as would admit of no evaſion, they could not put it off. Whatever be the emphaſis of that Prepoſition, or whether any at all, it is enough for our purpoſe, *that they withheld the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, verſ. 18. They ſuppreſſed the inbred true notions, which they had of God. Theſe they kept (as we uſe to ſay) under hatches, they obſcur'd and clouded them, and would not ſuffer them to ſhine out, and ſhew themſelves. And this they did in unrighteouſneſs, *i. e.* by force and violence, ſaith *Piſcator*, and *Calvin* too. Some count of an Hebraiſm in the expreſſion; but if it be otherwiſe, it ſerves our turn well enough. It was the baſe corruption of their hearts that made them oppreſſe, and keep under the natural light that was in them. The eternal power and Godhead were manifeſted in them, ſo as they were not, could not be ignorant of them. Hence I argue, that they wanted not light, or means to ſhew them a better way of worſhipping God, than the way they took, which was indeed againſt all reaſon, as the Apoſtle there proves. Conſider farther, that *they liked not to retain God in their knowledge*, verſ. 28. *i. e.* They hated, and were willing to be rid of that know-

τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *Quod de Deo cognoſcere fas eſt, vel expedit.* Calvin.

Indicat manifeſtationem quâ proprius urgeantur, quam ut refugere queant.

knowledge of God, which they had, and *v.* 25. *They changed the truth of God into a lye.* They heeded not the true, implanted notions of God, but followed their own devices, which carried them to false wayes of worshipping God, under the similitudes of his creatures. Now this was an act of their perverse Wills, in oppositon to, and in dispight, as it were, of their natural principles. Nay further, saith the Apostle, *vers.* 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankfull,* &c. They glorified him not as became his most excellent Divine Majesty, which they knew, or might have known so well, as to have served him in a better manner, if they would. *They were not thankfull:* They had a talent, and would not improve it as they might and should have done: Their returns were no way suitable to their receipts. Now consider the Apostles arguing in this case, and it appears plainly, that he clears God, in condemning the Gentiles, upon this account, that they had means and helps to know, and do better, but they rejected them to follow their own inventions. And the same may be said now of any of the Heathens alive, to shew, that they also are without excuse, as others that were before them.

Obj. Yea, but God denied them his special grace, which being denied, though they had done their utmost, they could never have improv'd their natural Light to discover Christ, who is the *only name given under heaven, whereby men must be saved,* Acts 4. 12. How then had they a sufficiency of means?

Sol.

Sol. This argument is grounded upon a ſuppoſition, which the Apoſtle never takes notice of, even when he labours *ex profeſſo*, to prove the Gentiles juſtly liable to Gods wrath and condemnation. And therefore ſuch a ſuppoſition to me ſeems to be of no great force, though ſome take much notice of it in their diſputings. For my part, I have nothing to do with the controverſie that is among the learned, or with ſtating the queſtion between them. My deſign in this diſcourſe is only to remove a ſtumbling block out of the way of the blinde, that hinders too many from walking in the way of Gods Commandments. And this I may do (I hope) without engaging ſo far in the controverſie, as ſome others have done.

I am to prove, that 'tis not the want of means to be allowed on Gods part, but a wilfull neglect of means on mens part, that will be their condemnation: And hath not the Apoſtle ſaid enough to this purpoſe in the caſe of the Gentiles? *Rom.* 1. Yet let me argue a little: What will it avail thoſe Gentiles, or any the like, to ſay in the great day, By all the light which God did lend us, we could never have diſcovered the only way of Salvation? For may not God anſwer, What's that to you? It concern'd you not at all to enquire what would, or what would not be. I never told you, what I would, or would not do more, in caſe you had improv'd the talents which you had. I gave you the knowledge of my ſelf, and mine infinite excellencies ſo far, as to ſhew you a way of worſhipping me in a better manner, than under

der the resemblances of my meanest creatures. But you have buried your Talent, and rebelled against the Light you had, and therefore are wicked and idle servants. What is it to me, or any others, what God will, or will not do, in case we do our utmost with what we have? God, I am sure, is not, cannot be bound, farther than he is pleas'd to binde himself: And how far God hath bound himself to answer the improvement of natural gifts, by an addition of super-natural grace, if I have not learned, I suppose, I need not be ashamed. Scripture indeed saith, *That to him that hath it shall be given*, Luke 8.18. And reason shews, that the use of any gift natural, or spiritual, is a means to increase it. But seeing grace and nature are not of the same kinde, I confess my self ignorant, how far the improvement of nature will avail to the procuring of grace. And yet I dare not say, God will not give grace to such as improve nature to the utmost. For I know not what God will do, and so it is meet, I leave him to his liberty, as he hath left himself. I am bold to think, that such a supposition, as some make in this case, is almost to as little purpose, as that question, Whether the Son of God should have come in the flesh, if *Adam* had never sinn'd? This we are sure of, that the Gentiles, and others have their talents, more or less, and all to be improved accordingly; and if they be not, is God unrighteous in requiring what he hath given?

Mat. 25. 24. The idle servant indeed charged his Master with austeritie; but they trifle lamentably, who there-

thereupon diſpute the vigour of Gods dealing with men, ſeeing it was not in the minde of Chriſt to note any ſuch auſterity, more than to commend uſury. Yet this is worthy our notice, that no ſervant made any complaint of his Maſter, beſides that idle one. For the ſcope and driſt of the Parable, it is to ſhew (what is to my purpoſe) that they have no colour of excuſe in the leaſt, who ſtifle the gifts of God, and make no advantage of them: Yea, it proves clearly, and undeniably, that God will require of all according to the meaſure of their gifts, as you may ſee further confirmed, if you pleaſe to conſult, and compare *Epheſ.* 4. 7. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. and *Luc.* 12. 48. For certain God will require no more than he hath given, and it is as certain he will require ſo much, and this is but reaſon. And now let any man that's but reaſonable reſolve, whether the verieſt Heathens, who had the leaſt means and helps, periſhed for lack of them, or for neglect of them: For to ſpeak as it is, they are condemn'd for abuſing their gifts, and chuſing to walk in darkneſs, when they had light to lead them into better wayes and practices.

Obj. But may not they ſay, Lord, if we had walkt by that light, it would not have ſerv'd for our everlaſting ſalvation?

Sol. And may not God ſtop their mouths by ſaying, What is it to you, whether it would have ſerv'd your turn or no? What did you know of what might, or would be? I gave you a ſtock to trade withall, and you have miſpent and waſted it. Why did not you that which

was your duty to do, in using what I had given you? You lacked nothing to that, but you had no mind to do what you might have done. You had light enough to convince you of your abominable Idolatries, but you would not be turned from them. You knew, or might have known, that I cannot be resembled by any of my Creatures, and yet you would needs worship me in the Images of men, and beasts, and birds, and creeping things. And now what can they say in reason, to be a sufficient excuse? They are condemn'd for their sinfull neglects, and not improving their talents: And is not their condemnation just? Whether what they had, would have gain'd eternal life, if they had done their utmost, will be no plea with God; but they will be found guilty, for not doing what they might have done, by the means they had. Take it, if you please, in a plain and familiar similitude. A Master gives his Servant a task, and so much light to do it: The Servant saith, the light he hath will not serve him to finish his task, and therefore never takes his Masters work in hand, or doth any part of it, but spends his light in doing nothing, or somewhat of his own business. I ask whether such a Servant may not justly be made to suffer? What was it to him, whether his light would serve for all his Masters work? He ought and should have done as much of it as his light would serve him for. What knew he, whether his Master would not have supplied him with more light, if he had found him at work by the light which he had? I need not apply this,

this, but only adde, that the Gentiles never had such a thought, as we suppose the Servant to have: But what light they had, they resolv'd to waste it, and never to regard their Masters work. Nay moreover, what if there was this in it too, that if they had had more light, they would have done as they did? Sure many have far more light, and do as bad as they. But I shall discourse this supposal no farther; the case, I hope, is clear enough, by what hath been said.

If any shall further pose me with the case of Infants, that never attain to years of discretion, I may truly and justly say, that this case is far beside the Question, as I have stated it. However, I shall not so pass it by, but give an account of my thoughts and apprehensions about it, after I have first proclaim'd my ignorance in those things, wherein God hath left me no manifestation of his mind and will.

That they are (as all *Adams* children) dead in trespasses and sins, and by nature the children of wrath, I verily believe, because *that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, John 3. 6. so as they must be born again, ere they can see the Kingdom of God.

That they are capable of grace, and by consequence of glory, I also believe, because the Lord ordained and appointed such little ones, to receive the seal of the righteousness of faith. Gen. 17. 12. Ro. 4. 11.

But for their everlasting estate, it is to me (as I suppose to all others) a secret, so as I can resolve nothing. Only I incline to think,

that ſome of them are ſaved, and ſome periſh in their ſin. But who are the one, and who the other, who can ſay? One of the Antients (quoted and allowed by ſome of our eminent Divines) ſaith thus, viz. *It is even by Infants manifeſt, that many be not ſaved, not becauſe of themſelves, but becauſe God will not.* And that they periſh not for any actual, wilfull ſins, or rejecting the light either of grace or nature, we may (I ſuppoſe) juſtly and ſafely yield, becauſe they never uſe or exerciſe reaſon or diſcretion. Yet all of them being the Cockatrice Eggs, if they are ſome of them cruſh'd, and kill'd in the ſhell, there's no cauſe nor occaſion of queſtioning the judgement of God, ſince 'tis for ſin only they are condemn'd. May not the Lord uſe his liberty in puniſhing ſin ſometimes in ſuch young ſinners, ſo long as (we all grant it) they are of the Serpents brood? And now I am afraid to wade any further, leſt at next ſtep I ſhould be over head and ears. I ſhall therefore reſt in the Anſwer I gave at firſt, deſiring only, it may be conſider'd of, That God, who knoweth all moſt perfectly from eternity to eternity, cannot but know what thoſe caſtaway children would have done, if they had liv'd to years of diſcretion. But theſe are ſecrets, ſuch as I ſhould never meddle with, if I were not accaſioned to it by others curioſity. That ſome infants are ſaved, no man (I ſuppoſe) queſtions, as alſo that they are ſaved only by the grace of the Covenant in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Yet here is a ſecret of divine providence in governing the world, to cut off ſuch

Auſt. Ep. 107. ad Vital.

graſts

grafts newly implanted into Christ, so as they never grow to bear any fruit. But these (I say again) are secrets which belong unto the Lord: The revealed things belong unto us, & with these we ought to content our selves. And the same is to be said in the case before, *viz.* That some sinners die in infancy, others in youth, some in middle age, and others not till they are very old, and all perish, though all attain not to the same pitch of rebellion against the Lord. To say no more, in such cases, I must confess, I know not what to say, because I desire to be wise only according to what is written, and for the wayes of God in his providence; I had rather in silence adore them, than in pride and curiosity (as some) to pry into them.

If any shall object, that 'tis a glorious and singular priviledge to have the means of grace, as the *Jews* had above others, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. I grant it, and say also, that 'tis a most dreadfull calamity to want them. But this is no argument against what I have undertaken to prove, seeing God hath not left himself without witness towards all, so as they are without excuse upon this account, *viz.* Because they neglected, and no way improv'd the talents with which they were entrusted. God (as we see) gives some persons more wit, and others more wealth, *&c.* yet they who have less, are liable to accounts for what they have, because it is a trust, though less than some others have.

As for others, who are not as the Gentiles, nor as Infants, one would think the case, as to

them, were much clearer. For they have means as much as any ever had; and yet even these have somewhat to say for themselves.

Obj. True, we have the Gospel Preached to us, and plenty of precious means (as you call them) to know Christ: But to what purpose, so long as we are one way or other shut out, so as not one, nor all, nor any of these means shall ever have any effect on us for our salvation? For this purpose they alledge,

1. An absolute and irrecoverable decree of God, that shuts out more than shall be received in.
2. The narrowing of Christs death by some, as to the extent of it, that a great many may well think themselves uncapable of any benefit by it.
3. The lamentable estate of all men since *Adams* fall, under an invincible inability, to recover themselves from that estate, more than a dead man hath to raise and lift himself out of the dust.

These are the stumbling blocks which too many lay in heavens way, to hinder their own salvation; and I cannot pass them by, without using my endeavours to remove them. For these have been, and still are, unhappy occasions to many, of putting off all the blame from themselves, yea, and obliquely, by consequence at least, to charge God himself.

In answering these objections, I am no way bound to engage in the controversies that still are among the learned, nor shall I resolve one way or other to the prejudice of any party, but leave

leave them to end their quarrels as they can.

All the busineſs I have to do, is to apply my ſelf to the capacities (and if the Lord ſo pleaſe, to reſolve the doubts) of thoſe that underſtand nothing, or very little of theſe matters, more than to make them ſo many ſtumbling-blocks, to hinder themſelves and others in their way to heaven, and ſad occaſions of bleſſing themſelves in their own hearts, whiles *they walk on in their own imaginations, to adde drunkenneſs to thirſt.* And now I come to Particulars after I have premiſed this one thing in general, *viz.* That let the decrees of God be as abſolute, as any of the learned have made them; or the death of Chriſt as much narrowed in the extent of it, as ever it hath been by any, yet my concluſion will ſtand firm, that men only are wanting to themſelves, and no charge in the leaſt can juſtly be laid upon God. Deut. 29. 19.

Sol. 1. In anſwering the firſt objection from Gods abſolute decrees, I ſhall ſay enough in this, that they are to us ſecret things, and cannot be known by us till the event declare them. We will ſuppoſe every mans name, who is certainly and infallibly ordained to eternal life, to be recorded, and all, and every of them, and no other to be ſaved. This, I ſay, we ſuppoſe, reſolving nothing in the queſtion: But this I ſay too, that if this be granted, yet there will be no excuſe by it for any ungodly men. And my reaſon is this, Becauſe no man can know himſelf left out of that Book of Life, till he comes to lye down under the power of death, and ſo

be past all possibility of working out his salvation. Whatever is said in Scripture of Gods electing some, and leaving others (take it in the strictest and most rigid sense of any) certainly no part of holy writ hath revealed to us, who those men are, so as we can know them. The day is yet to come, when the books of Gods decrees shall be opened: The written Word of God serves only to shew the revealed will of God, which if any man, without all exception, be carefull to observe, he is sure of eternal Life, unless God fail of his promise, which indeed he cannot do.

Tit. 1. 2.

Gods decrees are his *arcana imperii*, mysteries of state not to be pried into, but in all humility to be ador'd, because though never so secret, yet they are alwaies most righteous. In Kingdomes and Commonwealths on earth, Subjects have nothing to do with reasons of State, but are bound to obey the known Laws, which if they be careful to observe, they may justly expect to lead a peaceable and quiet life: *The Lord hath shewn thee, O man, what is good, and what he requireth of thee.* Be carefull to do this, and thou needst take no other care for thy Salvation, thou mayst assure thy self that thy name is written in the book of life. And for thy fuller assurance, consider what is clearly revealed in Scripture, *viz.* that the sentence of Life and Death shall past at the last day, only according to what men have done, with respect to Gods Commandments. Hence we read so often in Scripture of Gods rewarding men according to their works, and according to what

Mic. 6 8.

they

they have done in the body. I need not quote the ſeveral Texts that are to this purpoſe. The grand inqueſt at the great day of the Lord, will not be, Whether thou art elected, or not, but whether thou haſt obſerved to do as God hath commanded thee. If thou haſt received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as he is tendered to thee in the Goſpel, and haſt denied all ungodlineſs and worldlly luſts, and lived ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, there will be no queſtion of thy Salvation in the world to come.

In ſuum exitium inſaniunt quicunq; omiſſo Chriſto quidnam de ſe in arcano Dei conſilio conſtitutum ſit, inquirunt. Calv. in Ep 1. Joan. c. 3. v. 10.

Sol. 2. I anſwer yet further, that Gods decrees (be they never ſo abſolute and infallible) do no way in the leaſt infringe the liberty of ſecond cauſes, but men act as freely in all they do, as if there were no decrees at all: Suppoſe there was a decree of *Adams* fall (we aſſert nothing, but only ſuppoſe it) yet *Adam* was at liberty, whether to ſtand or fall. 'Twas never ſaid by any ſober man, that there was ever any decree, more than of permitting the fall of man. For certain, God did not force him to fall, or caſt him down, but he might have ſtood if he would himſelf. The Reverend and learned *Davenant* (with others) ſo reſolves, *That man fell according to Gods decree, but not becauſe of it.* And the Schoolmen reſolve unanimouſly, † *That Gods decrees do not infringe mans liberty.*

Non negamus decretum permiſſionis, &c.

Illud tamen arctè tenemus Adami peccatum non ab hoc decreto, ſed ſecundum hoc decretum eveniſſe. Determinat. Qu. 25. † *Decretum non tollit libertatem.*

Suppoſe

Suppose again all the actions of men to be under a decree, yet no man hath said, that mens actions, good and bad, are alike under it. For if they were, no man could possibly clear God from being the Author of sin: But there is this difference, that God decrees the good actions of men, so as to allow of them, yea, and to effect them by his grace and power; the evil only to permit them, to order and overrule them, for his most righteous and holy ends.

Alvares and others, conceive it impossible for us in our understanding to reconcile these two, *viz.* The absoluteness of Gods decree, and the liberty of mans will; but they say not, that they are inconsistent, and there is reason to shew they are not:

1. Because (as 'tis confessed by all) when the will of man determines it self to one thing, it doth not loose its liberty; but though it actually chuse one, yet even then it hath power to chuse another.

2. Gods decree doth not abolish, but only order mans liberty, by inclining the will one way or other, according to its nature.

3. The decree of God establisheth the liberty of mans will. For he so determines in his will, as the agency of second causes shall be according to their condition, *i.e.* Natural causes shall work naturally; voluntary causes, freely.

Though Gods decree excludes the act or event that's contrary to it, yet not the liberty of man to the contrary, as was said before. Moreover, God decrees, not only the things that are to be done, but also the manner how they shall be

be done, either voluntarily, or neceſſarily. Now things are done neceſſarily or contingently, in reſpect to ſecond cauſes, not to the firſt, who worketh all moſt freely, according to the counſel of his will. And ſo, what God hath decreed to come to paſs by free agents, alwaies comes to paſs moſt freely. *Judas* was as free, and might have forborn to betray his Maſter, as if there never had been any thing foreſeen or foretold about it. And ſo were the Souldiers free to have broken Chriſts bones, as well as the others. Luc. 22. 22. Joan. 19. 33. 36.

I ſhall ſhut up this with what I find in one of ours, whoſe judgement I much value, as doth every one (I ſuppoſe) that's any way acquainted with his Writings. *Our adverſaries* (ſaith he) *belye us, when they ſay, our opinion touching Predeſtination, maketh us deny Free-will. For we think indeed our will is moved effectually by Gods will in all our actions: which being the moſt effectual and univerſal Cauſe of all things, qualifies our will, and inclines it to the action: yet doth it not follow hereupon, that therefore we think our own will hath no freedome, but only that the freedome thereof depends upon a former freedome, which is the freedome of Gods will. And if we hold further (as ſome Divines do) that Gods will determines ours, and his decree flows into all the effects of our will, ſo that we do nothing, but as he directs our will, and purpoſe, yet this excludes not our own freedome, nor makes God the Author of ſin, nor implyes any inevitable neceſſity in our doing. The reaſon is, becauſe God moves not our will violently enforcing it, but* *Fo. white,* The Way to the true Church, Sect. 40. Digreſs. 41.

leaves

leaves an inward motive within our ſelves, th
ſtirs it up, which is the act of our Underſtandi
whereby we judge the things good or evil, that
will or nill. For in the proceeding of our wi
Firſt, the mind apprehends ſome object, and
fers it to the Will; Then upon the full and perf
judgement of the underſtanding, the Will follo
or refuſes it, as the underſtanding judges it go
or bad. And ſo this act, or judgement of our u
derſtanding, is the root from whence the f
choice of our will ariſeth, in ſuch manner,
whatſoever it be that goes before the act of
will, or ſets in with it to encline it (as G
Will doth) as long as it deſtroyes not, nor enfor
this practical judgement of reaſon, the liberty
our will is not taken away. And herein ſtands
true concord between Gods Predeſtination and m
Will, That the free and immutable counſel
Gods will, goeth indeed in order before the opera
on of our will, or at leaſt together with it, a
determines and circumſcribes it. But for
much as it neither enforces our will, nor takes
way our judgement, but permits it freely to le
and perſwade the will, it expels not our liber
but rather cheriſhes and upholds it: For where
ever theſe two concurr, viz. Freedome from v
lence and neceſſity, and the full conſent of Reaſo
there is the whole and true reaſon of Liberty.

Now I deſire, it may be obſerv'd, that th
reverend and learned man ſaith only, *Th*
ſome Divines (not all) *do hold, that Gods w*
determines ours, and his decree flows into all t
effects of our will, &c. And indeed, it is yet
great queſtion (as well it may) with many

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low farr the decree and unchangeable counsel f God doth determine our will about any thing e do. To me it is, and (I think) ever will e a mystery, as some profess it is to them; and herefore, from a matter so difficult and disputa- le, it is dangerous and desperate in any man to nferr, what is directly contradictory to his du- y, so plainly laid before him in the written Vord of God. For this is plain, and there can e no question about it: But the other (I say gain) is to us very uncertain; and what some alk of Gods determining our wills, and all our ctions, is very much question'd, and doubted f by others, and that for good reason, it being o mysterious, and so hard, if not impossible to e apprehended by us, as it is.

But whatever our Divines hold touching Pre- lestination, *the meaning is not* (as that learned man in the place before cited hath it) *That God by his Providence infuseth any constraint into the mind of man to enforce it, or any errour to se- duce it, or imposeth any necessity to bind it, but only that he enclines, and orders it to work freely, that which he hath determined for his own glory; And besides, his preserving the faculty thereof, moves and applyes it to the object, and work, that it willeth, or willeth.* And all this is no more, han that mans Will is subject to Gods Provi- dence, which no sober man will deny, or que- tion.

But to reason the case more familiarly, 1. Let men ask themselves, Whether they do not freely and willingly chuse their own ungodly wayes, and they cannot (I am sure) say to the

the contrary. For their Consciences will te
them, that in all their ungodly wayes, the
only consult to satisfie their lusts, and neve
have one thought of what God hath decreed.

I ask further, 2. Whether any man can po
sibly act in a way of wickedness, with a respe
to the fulfilling of Gods decrees, seeing no m
can know, what those decrees are? We re
indeed, *Act.* 4. 27, 28. *That* Herod *and P*
late, *&c. did what the hand and counsel of G*
had determined before-hand. Yea, the Devil him
self, in all his doings, is within the compass
Gods counsel; else what sad work would b
make in the world? But how can a man act,
as to intend his action, according to that whi
he knows not, nor doth ever consider of? Wh
is it to any ungodly man, what God hath d
creed, when he resolves with himself, that
will do according to his will, and serve his lus
whatever God hath said to the contrary? Th
it falls out according to the counsel of God,
beside, and against his intention, who wal
only after his own counsels: And so he do
whatever he doth, wickedly of choice, and fre
ly. How can it be otherwise? For he doth
gladly, and he rejoyceth to do evil. *Free-wi*
(as one hath observ'd) *is so farr from being*
in a sinner, as that all, who sin with delight a
pleasure, do more especially sin by their Free-wi
'Tis not the absolute decree of God, that sway
them to their ungodly courses; but they delig
in their abominations, and sin, and dye in the
sin, because they freely chuse so to do.

Nihil magis subest libero arbitrio quam quod ab eo fluit libenter, & gaudenter. Parisiensis.

I need say no more to this, if men would spe
what they know by themselves.

God is not ſo much (if I may ſo ſay) beholden to them, that they ſhould do any thing for his ſake. They do not damn their Souls, to fullfil his will, but their own luſt. They talk indeed ſometimes (as men do in their ſleep) of they know not what themſelves, What God hath decreed muſt be, and there's no avoiding it: But they do not ſerve their luſts, with any reſpect to Gods decree, more than *Judas*, who in ſelling his Maſter, look'd at nothing but the money that was to be gain'd by the bargain.

To ſhew more plainly, how little there is to be had from Gods decrees, to excuſe ungodly men, conſider, That all who had an hand, or heart in the death of Chriſt, were therein guilty of moſt horrible ſin, though they did what the hand and counſel of God had determined before, *Act.* 4. 27, 28. and *Act.* 2. 23. Though he were delivered by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God, yet was he crucified and ſlain by wicked hands. Whereas *Joſeph*, a Counſellour, *was a good man, and a juſt, though he conſented not to the counſel and deed of them that ſlew Chriſt:* Yea, therein he proved himſelf a good, and a juſt man; whereas if he had acted, or conſented, as others did, he had been guilty, as farr as they.

Sol. 3. No man ſober, and in his ſenſes, ever ſaid, or thought, that men are damn'd, becauſe God hath decreed them to be damn'd. Scripture (I am ſure) ſpeaks another reaſon of mens damnation. *Death is the wages of ſin*, Ro. 6. 23. *Tribulation and anguiſh upon the Soul of*

every

every man that doth evil, Ro. 2. 8. *God shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*; 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. *The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. And in this place we have a Catalogue of them who shall be damn'd; as also *Eph.* 5. 5, 6. where, after the naming of some, as *Whoremongers, unclean persons, they shall not inherit the Kingdom of Christ, and God*, v. 6. the Apostle gives this caution, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* For these, and such as these, Fornication, Adultery, and all Uncleanness, Drunkenness, and prophane Swearing, &c. for these men are damn'd. There's no notice taken of Gods decree, as the cause or occasion of mens damnation. They on Christs left hand at the last day, plead indeed, that if they were faulty, it was unwittingly, and they were not aware of it: But not one word of Gods decree fore-ordaining them unavoidably to damnation, as some men plead now. And as wise as they count themselves, I am confident, they will see better at the last day, and know, that their own evil wayes, and doings, and not Gods decree brought death and destruction upon them. Indeed, God never passed any decree to condemn any man, but for his sin and impenitency; which, if he be not found guilty, I know of no decree of God to damn him. But as we say of some men, for their excessive feeding, that they digg their graves with their own teeth; So we

may say of others, for their inordinate living, that they digg their Hell with their own hands. They are damn'd for nothing, but their wickedness, wherein they were incorrigible, and would not be reclaimed. Would ungodly ones repent, and reform, and chuse the wayes of Gods Commandements, they would answer this Objection to better purpose, than I, or any man else can. And yet this I'le warrant them, upon no worse ground than Gods Word, that if they repent, and cast away all their transgressions, there is no decree of God shall rise up in judgement to condemn them.

But for the further clearing of this 3d. Answer, I shall add somewhat out of some of the Ancients. *God may save a man, without his merits, because he is good: But he cannot damn a man, without his demerits, because he is just.* For (as another hath it) *When God shews mercy, and pardons, he gives of his own, and doth it of himself: But when he condemns, and punishes, he could not be righteous, if there were not something in us to deserve it.* How farr God may use his absolute Soveraign power, and Prerogative-Royal, in exposing the most innocent creature to suffer torments, I have no mind to dispute, though I am not wholly ignorant, of what some have discourst about it once; this I am confident of, that God never dealt so with any of his creatures, nor ever will, *Lam.* 3. 33. He doth not afflict willingly, *&c.* His bounty and kindness floweth from him freely of it self; His severity ariseth from somewhat in us. True, he inflicted the greatest torments, that ever were, upon

Potest Deus sine bonis meritis liberare, quia bonus est: Non potest quemquam sine malis meritis damnare, quia justus est. August. Ep. 105. *Deus de suo bonus est, de nostro justus.* Tertul. de Resur. Carn.

on his own Son, who was in himself more innocent and unspotted than any Angel. But the reason is obvious. The Son of God voluntarily engaged himself to be surety for sinful man, and so by his own act and deed contracted a debt, which he was bound to pay upon that account, and not otherwise.

And now, though I have said so much, I must yet say more, in answer to this first Objection; For it will be said,

Obj. That where there is an absolute Decree (as some hold) there is an impossibility, for some at least, to escape damnation. And though God damn no man, but for his sin; yet the event is infallible, so as they who are not under the decree of Election, must needs be damn'd however.

Davenant against Hoard.

Sol. 1. *We know no Decree, leaving men destitute of all such Grace, as would save them,* if themselves were not in fault.

Sol. 2. All necessity is not inconsistent with mans liberty, but he may be said to chuse his own destruction, notwithstanding any such decree. When a man is doing any thing, it is necessary, because he cannot do, and not do at once, But when he is in doing, he hath still his liberty, not to have done it, or to have done otherwise. Though there be a necessity of the Consequence, there is none of the Consequent. And if there be any force in this Argument, then by the same reason, God must be ignorant, who shall be saved, and who damn'd. For let it be granted, that God knows precisely, who shall be saved, and who damn'd, there is an unavoid-

Omne quod est, quando est, necesse est.

able

able necessity of the event accordingly, or God must not be omniscient, and infallible.

Obj. If any object, A knowledge in God, whereby he foresees things to come, not absolutely, but conditionally, what men, or Angels may do, by the freedome of their will, (no decree of God going before) considering them in such and such a condition, with such and such circumstances.

Sol. I answer, That God knows such conditional things absolutely and perfectly, though they never take effect. So he foresaw, that *Abimelech* would have defiled *Sarah*, and therefore hindred him. Gen 20 3. He knew certainly, that the men of *Keilah* would have delivered up *David*, and therefore prevented it, by sending *David* away. 1 Sam. 23. He saw the people would repent, when they should see War, and return into *Egypt*, and therefore led them about by another way. Ex. 13. 17. These were things that should come to pass in case only, if they had not been prevented, and yet God knew them absolutely and certainly. For an Hypothetical may be true in the connection and consequence, though it be false in both the parts of it. *Saul* came not down, nor was *David* delivered up to him; yet this was true, that if *Saul* had come down, the *Keilites* would have delivered up *David*: And this God knew absolutely and infallibly. And as certainly doth God know, what wicked men will do, if he leave them to themselves, and what will be the end of them; and cannot, by reason of his infinite understanding, be puzzled (as we poor creatures are) with conditionalities. Now if

he certainly knows the end of ungodly men, (whatever his decree be) the event must be according, or God is not infallible in his foreknowledge.

I would also be answer'd in this, *viz.* Why men quarrel so much with the decrees of God, in the matters and concernments of their Souls, and never make any question about them in other things? Why do they dress, and plow, and sow their Land, and never question, what God hath decreed about the harvest? For, I hope, all men will grant, that when they have us'd their utmost skill and endeavour in Husbandry, they may yet carry out much, and bring in little, and perhaps nothing. Else, Why do they say their Prayers, and begg of God their daily bread? I take it for granted also, if they pray at all, they pray for grace to do Gods will, and to keep that way, wherein they may have eternal life. And do not they in these Prayers acknowledge, that whatever their endeavours are, the end and event of all is from God only? Now here is somewhat which I cannot sufficiently wonder at, *viz.* That men will neglect no means, likely to effect their ends, in and about civil and worldly affairs; and yet in the matters of their Souls, will not be perswaded to use the means which God hath appointed, pretending they know not what God hath decreed. No man saith, Let my Land lie fallow as it is, I'le not be at the trouble or charge to plow or sow: If God have so decreed, I shall have a good harvest however. Or if any man should so argue, and make no improvement of his Estate, but come to begg-

gery,

gery, his Neighbour-good husbands will not be much puzzled, to give a reaſon of it. They will ſay preſently, He might have maintain'd himſelf as well as they, if he would have been a good husband. For they find by experience, that by their pains in manuring their Land, they have enough to live upon; and whiles they do what belongs to them, and leave the iſſue to God, he is not wanting to them, in his bleſſing upon their endeavours. I need not apply this to the preſent caſe, whoever reads, may do it.

I ſhall therefore proceed to tell thee, whoever thou art that replieſt, or diſputeſt ſo much in this caſe, That Gods Decree (whatever it be) never excludes, but alwayes implies the uſe of means on our part, for obtaining our deſired ends. Thou knoweſt not the number of thy dayes, and yet wilt not forbear thy daily bread, and ſay, I ſhall live ſo long as God hath determined: Nor wilt thou, for that reaſon, ſtabb thy ſelf at the heart. Why wilt thou be ſo perverſe, as to argue ſo unreaſonably about thy Soul, and Salvation, when thou never doſt ſo about any thing elſe, that concerns thee never ſo little.

But 'tis no hard matter to know the reaſon, and theſe men might eaſily ſee it, if they had but a mind to it. They are wedded (as we ſay) to their wills, and reſolv'd to ſerve their luſts: And being thus reſolv'd, they are aſham'd to own ſo baſe a deſign; and therefore ſet their wits on work, to find out ſomewhat, that may ſerve to ſet a fair gloſs upon their unworthy and baſe practices. And this will one day be found

to be so indeed, however they state the question now. They love their [illegible] and will not leave them, though they lose [illegible] Souls: But they would not have others think so of them; nor can they abide to reason it alone, with their Consciences in cool blood. Hence they consider, how they may lay the blame some-where beside themselves, and rather than fail, let God himself bear it, though of all others he least deserves it. This, and nothing else, causes all the adoe, that's made in the world about Gods Decrees.

But learn in time, O vain men, whoever you are, that so quarrel: For God will easily wipe off all these aspersions, and needs not for your sakes, to lay aside his infinite excellencies. What! must God have no certain fore-knowledge of things future, nor any disposing hand or counsel over and about his Creatures, but presently they must rise up, and say, He hath determin'd them by an infallible decree, (no less in effect, than to say) he hath enforc'd them against their wills, to do wickedly, and to damn themselves for ever? I tell thee, in Gods name, whoever thou art, whatever God hath decreed, (for that I determine not) Life and Death are before thee, and thou art free to chuse which thou wilt. He doth indeed order and over-rule thee, in all thou dost: How else should he be, what he is? But he doth not compel, or enforce thee to any thing; but leaves thee to act, as a reasonable Creature, according to thine own choice; as I shall hereafter shew, in my Answers to the third grand Objection.

What hath been said in answer to this first,

may ſuffice, I hope, to ſatisfie ſuch as have indeed a mind to ſave their Souls. For ſuch as will not leave tampering with Gods Decrees, in hope to find ſome colour for their impenitency, and obſtinacy in ſin, I ſhall leave them to try it out with God, when he ſhall come to judge the World, in aſſured confidence he will then plead his own cauſe, as they ſhall have nothing to anſwer.

The ſecond great Objection againſt my Concluſion, may be thus formed.

Obj. 2. IF Chriſt died not for all, and every man, (as many ſay) then God hath not ſufficiently provided for all mens Salvation: But Chriſt died not for all, *&c. Ergo, &c.*

The force and ſtrength of this Argument lieth on this, That our Salvation depends upon Chriſts Satisfaction for us. Hence it follows, That if Chriſt, by his Death, have not ſatisfied for a great many, they are left to periſh, for want of that proviſion, and ſo they are not to be blam'd, though they die in their ſins.

Sol. The Diſpute, that hath been, and ſtill is, about the extent of Chriſts death, I ſhall not meddle with, ſo as to determine any thing one way, or other, becauſe I hope to do my work, without engaging my ſelf ſo farr. For Gods intent and counſel in delivering his Son to death, and Chriſts intention in undergoing death, they are to me, and (I ſuppoſe) to others alſo,

hidden, so as we cannot say, For these Christ died, and not for those. It belongs to Gods will of purpose, whatever it be, and therefore we cannot resolve any thing about it. For Gods will of precept, we know what it is, *viz. He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned*, Marc. 16. 16. This is the Gospel, which Christ before his Ascension charg'd his Apostles to preach, and I know of no other, *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, Joan. 3. 16. This Gospel I believe with all my heart, because I never find in Scripture, that men are condemn'd, because no price was paid for them, but only for unbelief. *Heb.* 3. 19. *So we see, they could not enter in, because of unbeleef.* An evil heart of unbelief, is all they are warn'd to beware of, *v.* 12. *vid.* also *Heb.* 10. *fin.* with many places besides in the New Testament, which I need not cite. Hence I am bold to resolve, That no man lieth under a necessity of perishing in his sin, who lives and dies not in unbelief: Or thus, That Christ died, and satisfied so farr, as whosoever believeth, shall be saved; and that men shall be damn'd, only upon the account of unbelief. For this (I say again) is the Gospel we are bound to preach; and this is the Gospel, according to which God will judge the World. In that day, the question will not be, Whether we were of the number, for whom Christ died; we shall be question'd only, Why we did not believe in Christ, offer'd to us in the Gospel.

Quest. But here it will be ask'd by some, Whether they, who never had the Gospel preached to them, as we, and many others have had it, shall be condemn'd for not believing on Christ, whom they never heard of?

Sol. 1. I dare not say (as some) That if they had improv'd their natural knowledge of God to the utmost, they might have been sav'd by the kindness and mercy of God, without the knowledge of Christ the Mediator, because the Scripture saith, *There is no other Name given under Heaven, &c. Act.* 4. 12.

2. Whatever the account be, upon which they perish, the Apostle hath resolv'd in terms, *Ro.* 1. 20. That they are inexcusable.

3. I am not able to apprehend, How Gods Works of Creation, as Sun, Moon, and Stars, *&c.* did preach Christ to them.

4. I shall only offer somewhat, wherein I dare not be peremptory, but shall leave it to the consideration of such as are judicious, *viz.* That the Heathen of old, who had not the Law of God, as *Israel* had; yet heard the report and fame of the God of *Israel*, and thereupon ought to have enquir'd after him, the only living and true God, who alone is to be praised, and serv'd in such wayes, as he himself hath appointed. And the rather, because by their natural light, they might have discover'd, that what they worshipp'd, could not be God, and that the true God cannot be worshipp'd by mens hands, *Act.* 17. 25. That which first enclined and encouraged me to this conceit (as most may count it) was, what the Apostle hath said of *Rahab*, *Heb.*

Israelitæ fuerunt depositarii, & Oeconomi fœderis, Calvin in Rom: c: 3: v: 2: i: e: They had the honour and favour to carry the light, which others were bound to follow.

Heb. 11. 31. *By Faith the Harlot* Rahab *perished not, with them that believed not*, &c. Here are two things, which I desire may be observed concerning her. 1. Her Faith, which was no less than a justifying, saving Faith; else her Name had not been enroll'd amongst those Worthies, that are there recorded. And *Jac.* 2. 25. She is said, to be justified, in the same manner as *Abraham* was. 2. That she came by her Faith, only by the report she heard of the God of *Israel*, as she professeth; *Josh.* 2. 11. *The Lord your God, he is God in Heaven above, and in Earth beneath.* And *v.* 9, 10. She professeth She had heard, what God had done for *Israel*, such as no other God could do; and for this cause she desired to joyn her self to the people of the God of *Abraham*, and to have her lot with them. And so doing, *She perished not with those* Heb. 11. 31. *that believed not.* Who were they? Questionless her Neighbours, the men of *Jericho*, and all the *Amorites* (except the *Gibeonites*) who notwithstanding they heard the same things reported, resolved to fight it out against God, and his people *Israel*. And did not the *Gibeonites* the same? *Josh.* 9. 24. For they so answered for themselves, when *Joshua* questioned them: *It was certainly told thy servants, How that the Lord thy God commanded his servant* Moses *to give you all the Land, and to destroy all the Inhabitants of the Land from before you; therefore we were afraid of our lives, because of you, and have done this thing.* What they did, the rest of the *Canaanites* should have done, and have been content to be hewers of wood, &c. that so they might

might serve and worship the living and true God. Sure, the rest of the Inhabitants of *Canaan* heard and knew as much as the *Gibeonites* did; but they hardned their hearts, and so perished in their unbelief. We read also of the *Kenites, who were the children* of Hobab, *the Father in Law of* Moses, who chose to joyn themselves to the *Israelites*; and why might not others have done the like? And may not the Queen of *Sheba* be an instance to the same purpose? Read the Story, 1 *Reg.* 10. and *Mat.* 12. 42. And why should not the *Syrians* all believe, as well as *Naaman*, 2 *Reg.* 5. seeing they knew as well as he, the miracle which the God of *Israel* had wrought upon him? Questionless, that and other miracles were done to convince the Heathen. Judic. 4. 11.

Once this is clear and certain, That the *Jews* were a people hated of all other Nations, and that upon this account only, because *their Laws were different from all people*, Ester 3. 8. How should they be otherwise? For they were the Laws of *Jehovah*, the living and true God, condemning all the Idolatries, and superstitious Vanities of the Heathen. But the Heathen should not therefore have hated the *Israelites*, as they did; but rather have cast away their abominations, and sought, and served the God of *Israel*, as he had commanded. Questionless the spite of all other Nations against *Israel*, was the old hatred, that is in all men by nature, against God, and all that is of God. It might be said of the *Israelites* then, as some of them said of the Christians afterward: *They were a Sect* (or sort of people) Act. 28. 22.

people) *every where spoken against.* Now could never have been so, but that the *Gentiles* had heard of the *Israelites* way of worshipping the Lord *Jehovah*, and yet hated them upon that account. And do not all Nations, at this day, hear the report of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do not *Turks* and *Tartars* know the God of the Christians, and blaspheme him? So do Infidel *Jews*, and all the Pagans at this day in *Asia*, *Africa* and *America*; and yet they enquire not after him, care not to own, or serve him, but still worship the works of their own hands, yea (to speak with Scripture) Devils. May we not therefore say, *Have they not heard? Yes verily, the sound of Christ, and the Gospel, is gone out into all the earth.*

Ro. 10. 18.

Quest. If any shall yet quarrel Gods Dispensations towards the *Gentiles*, both of old, and now adayes, because the light of Gospel-truth is not alike imparted to all, by an equal proportion of means, For that end,

Sol. I shall ask them, Whether God may not take the same liberty, that men do many times, and yet are no way questioned for it? Must he be tied up, and bound to terms, such as we our selves would not? May not he take, and use his liberty, in the dispensing of his own gifts, specially when he leaves none without witness? I wish men would read and meditate on *Mat.* 20. 15. where you may see, how ill the Lord takes it, to be questioned and quarrelled in that inequality, which seems to be so to us. What if God see, that if they had more light and means than we, and some others have, that they would

rebel

rebel the more, as we, and many others do? Is it not enough, to make them inexcusable, that they hear, where Life and Salvation is to be had? Sure, they cannot say truly, They have not heard. They hear (for ought I know) as much as *Rahab* did: and they must say, if they speak truth, We have heard of Jesus Christ, but we did not like him, to believe in him, as the Christians do. And may they not then be said to perish, as the men of *Jericho*, *Heb.* 11. 31. *Who believed not?* They should have given credit to those common and confessed reports of God, and his wonderful works for his people: But they despised them, as light news; and refused to be at the pains of any further enquiry after God. And for this they are charged with Unbelief, as *Rahab*, on the contrary, is commended for her Faith. And do not the *Turks* and Heathen now the same, or the like?

I have yet one thing more to offer, *viz.* That the *Gentiles* of old, who were a people farr off, had wilfully separated themselves from *Noah*'s and *Shem*'s Families, in which the worship of God was preserved, and kept pure for a while; And so did others, before the Flood, separate themselves; and therefore in their Idolatries (unto which they were given up) received the recompence of their errour, that was meet; God most righteously punishing the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children in after-ages, by leaving them without the means of grace and knowledge, which some others had. And yet (as you heard before) he left not himself without sufficient witness against them.

But

But the chief design of this Discourse being
shew, How inexcusable they are, who have
light of Gospel-truth, but do not walk in it;
shall proceed to enquire into the case of these
that turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in
wantonness, some way or other receiving it
vain. For these (I say again) do not per
for want of a Remedy, but only for not app
ing it.

For proof hereof, I appeal to *Joan* 3. 1
God so loved the World, that he gave his only
gotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, shou
not perish. Here's enough said to shew, Th
God is not wanting to men, but that they a
wanting to themselves. There's provision mad
such, and so much; as none can perish, b
they who refuse to make use of it. *Whosoev*
believeth on him, shall have everlasting li
What can be said or done more on Gods part
What constructions are made of this Scripture
many, I shall not mention, but shall give t
sense of *Calvin* upon it. "The Love of G
"here testified (*saith he*) respects *Humanu*
"*genus*, mankind; and a note of universality
"added, to invite all promiscuously to the p
"taking of this life, and to cut off all excu
"(*observe that*) from such as believe not. F
"this purpose (*saith he*) the word WORLD
"is used, to shew that though there be nothi
"in the World worthy of Gods love and favou
"yet to shew himself gracious to the who
"World, he calls all without exception to t
"Faith of Christ. Indeed he saith too, That
"eternal is offer'd unto all, so as notwithstand-
"ing

"ing Faith is not of all. And in this he confeſſeth, the ſpecial grace of God to ſome particular perſons.

Let it alſo be conſidered, That the word [WORLD] cannot rationally be taken in any other ſenſe. For in the next Verſe, it is meant of the World, whereof ſome are ſaved, and ſome periſh, (as Reverend *Davenant* obſerves) and that they who periſh, periſh only becauſe they believe not on the Son of God. I ſhall not debate, what advantage the coming of Chriſt into the World brought to ſuch, as make no uſe, reap no benefit by it. Certainly it ſtates the queſtion beyond all diſpute, That as Faith only ſaves, ſo Unbelief only condemns, which is all I have to prove. For there's not the leaſt hint of any defect on Gods part, but all the fault is laid on man alone, in not believing on the Son of God ſent into the World, not to condemn, but to ſave it. And here let *Calvin* ſpeak what he thought in this caſe: *Certum quidem eſt, non omnes ex Chriſti morte fructum percipere: Sed hoc vitio fit, quia eos impedit ſua incredulitas.* In Ep. ad Heb. cap. 9. v. 27. 'Tis only by Infidelity, that all are not partakers of the benefits of Chriſts death.

Let me now argue a little further, Why do we perſwade all men, without exception, to believe on Chriſt, with a promiſe of Salvation by him, if they believe? Is it reaſonable to do ſo, if we are not perſwaded, there is ſufficient proviſion made, ſo as nothing is wanting, if there be Faith to receive it? As I take it, we ſhould not perſwade men to believe on Chriſt, by telling them,

them, If they believe, then Christ died for them: Rather, as I suppose, we may safely tell them, That Christ died for them, and thereupon perswade them, to believe on him. We are bound to believe, that the thing is true, before we can believe our share in it. The Object is in order of Nature, before the Action. My belief makes not a thing true; but it is true in it self, and therefore I believe it. And this is the method of Scripture, as farr as I know. The Feast was first prepared, and then the Guests were invited: *All things are ready, come unto the Marriage*, Mat. 22. 4. The *Jews*, who are the guests there invited, refus'd to come: But were they not cast utterly off, and put into that condition, wherein they abide unto this day, upon this account, That the Son of God *came to his own, and his own received him not*? How could they refuse, if there were no provision made for them? Or justly perish only for refusing? I am very willing to believe, That Christ was offer'd for me, before he was offer'd to me; and that if I dye in my sins, it is only for my not receiving Christ offered to me. Sure I am, that Scripture never layeth the death of Sinners, upon the want of a λύτρον, or Price of Redemption; but always upon unbelief, disobedience, neglect of, and setting light by Christ, and the things of Christ. And this is enough to serve my turn. That Scripture never hints any impediment to mens Salvation, more than an evil heart of unbelief. For the intention of God, and Christ, what is that to me, or any man else, seeing it is secret? The revealed things belong to us; and

John. 1. 11

we

we ſhall (for certain) be queſtion'd one day only, Why we did not accept of Chriſt, when he was tendred to us? It will not then excuſe us, to ſay, We could not tell, whether we were of thoſe, whom Chriſt intended to ſave. Once we have the command of God, to believe on the Son of God; and we have a ſure promiſe, if we believe, to be ſaved. And this, and nothing elſe, will be the condemnation of the World, *viz.* That they diſobeyed Gods command, and believed not his promiſe.

Thus all Gods Meſſengers have a Warrant to invite all men to believe. But not to invite the Devil, though they had an opportunity to ſpeak with him, as any man may ſpeak to another: Yea, I am bold to think, it would be any mans ſin, to promiſe Salvation to the Devil, upon his believing in Chriſt. It were indeed a belying the Lord, and ſaying, He ſaith, what he hath not ſaid. And it were a deceiving the Devil, in telling him, that which is not ſo. For the conſequence of this Hypothetical [If thou believeſt on the Son of God, thou ſhalt be ſaved] is true, as to any man, without exception: But as to the Devil, it is (for ought I know) falſe in the connexion, as well as in the parts of it; becauſe he is none of thoſe, to whom God hath promis'd Salvation, upon condition of believing on Chriſt, *Joan.* 3.16. For the Command of God to believe, and his Promiſe of Life upon believing, is all the ground-work upon which our Faith is built; and this foundation the Devil hath not, for his warrant and encouragement to believe on the Son of God. *For the Son of God*

took not on him, or took not hold on, or helped not the Angels, Heb. 2. 16. *but the Seed of* Abraham. Where [*Abrahams* Seed] notes not the *Jews* only (as all will grant) but the *Gentiles* alſo; and that expreſſion is us'd, to ſhew, that Chriſt was the ſame, that was promis'd to the Fathers; and ſets out the benefit of Redemption, as belonging to mankind, but not (if I may ſo ſpeak) to Devil-kind.

Beſide, It is not the Devils Sin, not to believe on Chriſt, or not to receive him: He hath ſins enough beſides, both for number and nature; and queſtionleſs is a greater ſinner, than any man can be; having ſinn'd himſelf out of the greateſt happineſs (and that in actual poſſeſſion) that a Creature is capable of, and ſinn'd againſt that Light, which no man on earth can attain unto. But Unbelief is not his ſin, becauſe there is no command obliging, nor any promiſe inviting him to believe on Chriſt. But Unbelief is the ſin of men, yea it is in a manner all ſin, as it ſeals upon a man his other ſins, and cauſeth *the wrath of God to abide upon him,* *Joan.* 3. *fin.* Yea, it is the great aggravation of all ſins in this reſpect, that they might have been all pardon'd, on ſuch eaſie terms, as *Believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

We may now beſpeak ſinners, as *Naamans* ſervants beſpake him: *If the Prophet had commanded thee ſome great matter, wouldſt thou not have done it,* &c. So, if God had requir'd ſome great matter of us, for our Salvation, ſhould we not willingly have done it? But 'tis a very eaſie thing, that he requireth us to do.

2 Reg 5.

The

The Word is nigh us, as the Apoſtle ſhews, *Ro.* 10. 8. We have nothing to do, or ſuffer, for the appeaſing of Gods Wrath, or for the ſatisfying of his Juſtice, or for purchaſing the heavenly inheritance. The Son of God, in our fleſh, hath done and ſuffered all; and we have nothing to do, but to receive him, as he is freely tendred and offer'd to us. The Feaſt is prepared, without any coſt or care of ours; and we are call'd to partake of it, with a ſure promiſe of welcome.

All this while I forget not, what a controverſie there is among the Learned, about the extent of Chriſts death, but I dare not touch with it; and the rather, becauſe it no way concerns me, in the main deſign of this diſcourſe. I have no controverſie, but with the frowardneſs and wilfullneſs of ſinners, who are willing to make God the Author, both of their ſin, and condemnation; and pretend, That if all men would believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as they are requir'd, they ſhould not however be ſaved. Theſe are the men I now deal with, and theſe I deſire to try, (whatever is controverted amongſt the more Learned) whether this be not a truth, *viz.* That Chriſt hath ſatisfied ſo farr, as they ſhall be ſaved, if they believe: And to theſe I ſay, if they dye in their ſins, it is not upon the account of Chriſts not dying for them, but only for their not-believing on him. And for this I appeal to the whole tenour of Scripture, and in particular to *Joan.* 3. 16. where the gift of Chriſt is common, but the efficacy of it limited to believing. And good cauſe

why, since Christ dyed for none, to save them whether they believe, or not.

'Tis neither my design, nor desire, to dispu with any, but with unreasonable and wick men. And therefore I shall take no notice, what is commonly said, *viz.* That Christ dy in the stead, and sustain'd the persons of all; to whom the benefit of his Death was intend Only I say, If a summ be paid, sufficient to deem so many poor Captives, provided th shall all their dayes serve him that is their R deemer; are they not all redeem'd, thou some should refuse the condition, and chuse be Slaves still? However, this I affirm, T the extent of Christs Death is such, and so gre as I never read, or heard of any one, that rished in his sin, because Christ had paid price for his Redemption. For the tenour of Gospel, I gave it before, and I have ne learnt any other, than, *That he that believ shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall damned.* Let others dispute, for whom Ch dyed, (I cannot hinder them) I am sure Chr never suffered or satisfied for any, so as th shall have the saving benefits of his death, wi out laying hold on him by a lively Faith. A I shall be as sure, on the other side, That wh ever shall believe on the Lord Jesus, with all heart, he shall be saved by him. And this I ta to be sound Doctrine, that may be safely preac ed to all, and every one, without exceptio *viz.* Thou, O man, whoever thou art, Chr dyed for thee; and if thou believe on him, wi all thine heart, as God hath commanded the

Mark. 16. 16.

thou ſhalt be ſaved. In this we preach the tenour of the Goſpel, as you have it before; and he that thus preacheth Chriſt, will give little encouragement to ſinners, except to repent, and turn to God; and ſo all ſinners ſhould by all means be encouraged. But here is no encouragement to impenitency, or unbelief, becauſe there's no promiſe of any benefit by Chriſts death, but only to true believers, and penitents. This then I reſolve, That if I, or any other, dye in our ſins, it is only, becauſe we believe not on the Son of God. For of a truth, I know not how to clear and juſtifie God, (as I deſire to do) if any thing done, or not done on his part, be it, that ſhuts us out from having eternal Life. I am (I confeſs) altogether for this, That a wicked, proud, filthy, evil heart of unbelief, and nothing elſe, ſtands in the way of mens Salvation; and if that be once taken away, there will be no other hinderance. I have ſuch thoughts of God, as I cannot think, but he hath done his part, ſo as nothing will be wanting, if we are but heartily willing to do ours.

I could indeed ſay (what is ſufficient in this caſe) That no man knows, or can know, (ſuppoſing Chriſts death to be ſo confin'd, as ſome will have it) Whether he be one of thoſe, for whom Chriſt dyed not. And therefore, if it were an adventure, a man had better run the hazard, than do worſe, by wilfull ſhipwracking himſelf, through final impenitency and unbelief. As a man (one would think) ſhould not refuſe to caſt the Dice for his Life, though he knew for certain, that ſome or other muſt dye; and he

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guilty, as they were, who *made light of the i
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well as others, if they would have come. A
therefore I wiſh all, whom it may concern,
be very wary, that poor ignorant Souls, wh
are too much bent, and ſet upon undoing them
ſelves, may have no occaſion given them of
doing. For what danger can there be, in ſayi
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For the Queſtion about abſolute and conditional Redemption, I am not wholly ignorant of it: But I ſtill reſolve to wave all controverſies of that nature, and only reaſon the caſe with poor Souls, that they may not caſt themſelves away in their perverſe diſputings, about they know not what; and in their wilfull neglecting of that Salvation, which they are ſure to obtain, in a way of believing, and obeying God, and not otherwiſe. To theſe I ſay again, that which is the Word of God, who cannot lye: Let them repent of their unlawful deeds, deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, lead ſober, and righteous, and godly lives; and therein give a ſure evidence and proof of their reall cloſing with, and accepting of Chriſt by Faith, that they ſhall be as certainly ſaved, as any that are now in Heaven. For this is indeed Goſpel, and this is the Word of Grace, as they may eaſily read, if they will but open their Bibles. But they may turn over their Bibles long enough, or ever they find any Text to this purpoſe, That Chriſt dyed to ſave them, though they never believe. *Paul* and *Silas* told the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* They never ſcrupled, Whether he were one of them, for whom Chriſt dyed; but preached to

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him the Gospel, as they had received it of the Lord: And he doing, as he was commanded, had forthwith as much as he desired, or needed.

Before I close up this, I shall add one thing more. Is there any man alive, of whom any other can, or dare say, This is one of them, for whom Christ dyed not? If there be not, then make no difference, where thou knowest none; but be wise according to that which is written. This we may all safely resolve upon, We shall never suffer at Gods hand, for our ignorance, or neglect of any thing, that God hath not revealed in his Word. *The things that are revealed, belong unto us*, &c. These we are to believe, and obey, and so live. And if there be any man excepted in the Act of Pardon, except Unbelievers, and that only for their unbelief, it is more than I ever read of, or could learn by reading the Bible.

Deut 29. 29.

The third great Objection Answered.

Obj. 3. WHat is all this that you have said, of Christs dying for us, in case we believe, so long as we have no power of our selves to believe, or do any thing, towards the working out of our Salvation? Alas! We would fain relieve our selves, and rise out of the misery we lye under; but we are insufficient of our selves to do any thing, and thus we have been alwayes taught by our Ministers. Now it being

thus

thus with us, whose fault is it, if we perish, and die in our sins?

Sol. Let the fault lye where it will, I hope to make it certain and clear, that it lyeth not on Gods part; yea more, that it lyeth only on our part.

1. If I say, There is no inability in sinful men, but what they have brought upon themselves, I suppose, much is said, for the clearing of God in this case: And this is most certainly true, but I shall not insist upon it, because there is much more to be said, and more to our purpose.

2. I say, in Answer to this grand Objection, That there is no inability in man to repent, and believe in Christ, and to bring forth good fruits, such as become Repentance and Faith, which he might not put off, if he himself would. And if this be made good, I suppose, the Objection from mans inability, will have little force in it.

That man hath brought himself into a miserable incapacity, there is no question; and that the Devil helps to keep him under it, is as unquestionable: But that man may put it off, if he will, may seem at first to be strange, however I hope anon to prove it true.

For the insufficiency and inability of a natural man to all, or any spiritual good, I am (I hope) as much as any man else, can justly and reasonably be, and I hope to shew my perswasion in this sufficiently, by what I have to say. Only I am impatient to hear some discourse (as sometimes they do) of mans inability by nature, as if it were a natural and necessary, more than a sinful infirmity.

To

To prevent all misprision of me in this poin
I profess my unfeigned Faith in these Particular
viz. That no man can come to Christ, except t
Father draw him, Joan. 6. 44. *That Chr*
dyed for us, when we were weak, Ro. 5. 6.
weak, as if he had not lifted us up by his powe
we should never have risen again. I know a
Ro. 8. 7. acknowledge, *That the carnal mind is enmity*
the Law of God, and cannot be subject, till G
circumcise the heart, and take away the stone o
of it. I willingly grant, *That God works in*
both to will, and to do, Philip. 2. 13. That
begins, continues, increases, and accompli
the work of his grace in all his people. N
have I any quarrel against any, that cry do
the ability of man by nature; for I am fully a
wholly with them, if they will say (as I) Th
mans weakness is also his wickedness: As o
Law also determines, that there is *Infirmitas*,
well as *Necessitas culpabilis*.

Here it will be said, That every one saith
much. And I take it for a satisfying answer,
as we shall not further quarrel about it. All th
I aim at, is this, That they that understan
would express themselves in this, so as vain a
We have not (as Papists report us) turn'd men into beasts or stones, by taking away free-will; but acknowledge it so farr, as to make fooliſh men may not please themselves, in a m
conceit of their natural infirmity and weakness,
if it were not their wickedness, and they we
to be pitied only, but not blam'd for it, or (
most) not very much. For thus, or to th
purpose, many will discourse upon occasion
saith unexcusable before Gods judgement seat. *Jo White, Way to the true Church, Sect. 40.*

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That as farr as God ſhall give them grace, and wherewithall, they are not, and they will not be wanting in their endeavours, to do the beſt they can. They are by nature, and of themſelves, able to do little, or nothing, that good is; and wiſh it were otherwiſe, but how can they help it? They have a good heart and will; but they want ſtrength to do what they deſire. And what is this, but a favouring themſelves, with a kind of reflection upon God, as if he were wanting in ſomewhat; and that they might do better, if he had done his part?

Beſides, I am not ignorant, what an Argument is urg'd by ſome, upon this ground of pleading mans natural inability, and what ado there is to anſwer it; when (I think) one word would be enough to choak it, as I hope to ſhew anon.

Now, for the ſatisfaction of all theſe, I grant, There is a lamentable inability in every man by nature; But this I contend for, That man hath a Liberty alſo, which he ſhews abundantly, upon all occaſions, and never more, than in his ſin, and his reſiſting God, in all the ſaving methods uſed for bringing him to repentance. Whatever inability he hath, (and let him make as much as he can of it) he hath a liberty too, ſo much, as he doth moſt freely chuſe all the ungodly wayes, wherein he walks. And this I intend to diſcourſe a while, in anſwer to the third Objection.

I do not mean by Free-will, a power in man to will good and evil alike;

Nor do I ſet Free-will againſt the grace of God, as Papiſts do.

To ſay, That a man by nature hath Free will, may ſeem ſtrange to ſome; but it is true however;

ever; and no disparagement at all to the free grace of God, but serves to make all flesh inexcusable before Gods Judgement seat.

To clear this, we must distinguish, as *Zanchy*, and others do, between the nature, and the power of mans Free-will. And to this purpose speaks *Zanchy*, in *Tractat. de lib. arbit. cap.* 6. *If we respect the nature of Free-will in man, it is alwayes free: But if we consider the power of it, it is a servant to sin, and can of it self do nothing but sin.* And to this purpose he cites *August. Tom.* 3. *in Enchirid. ad Laurent. cap.* 30. *Man using his Free-will amiss, or abusing it, lost both himself, and it. And therefore learned men teach,* † *That mans will is rather a slave than free. Yet the same men, with one consent, write, That the will of every man, whether good or evil, is alwayes free; so as whatever he wills, whether good or evil, he wills it freely, and without force.* And then again he cites *August. Tom.* 7. *contra Jul. Pelag. lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. * *Free-will is so farr from being lost in a sinner, as by it all do sin, specially such as sin with delight,* &c. And then he prosecutes this Thesis, † *That man after his fall, though he became a servant of sin, hath not lost all his liberty, but still retains that which is natural.* And this is nothing else, than what the Greek Fathers call αὐτεξούσιον, which imports a man to be *Sui juris* *, as every man is to

Liberum arbitrium per peccatum factum est servum.

Liberum arbitrium semper liberum est, non semper est bonum.

† *Libera est homini voluntas, sed ad malum.* Aust. contr. Pelag. Ep. lib 1.

* *Per illud peccant qui cum delectione peccant.*

† *Serva voluntas est, quæ propter corruptionem sub malorum cupiditatum imperio captiva tenetur, ut nihil quam malum eligere possit, etiamsi id sponte, & libenter faciat.* Calv. de lib. arb. * Free-will is the operation of the will, in chusing, or refusing, what the judgement of our understanding offereth.

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the elicite acts of his will, wherein he cannot be forc'd, Absolute freedome of will is properly in God, who can neither be compell'd, nor yet order'd, or over-wrought by any other: But we give it to man, so farr, as he is free from all force and compulsion. So any man uses his Free-will, as often, as according to the judgement of his own reason, he chuses that which seems best to him; not forc'd by any principle without, but freely inclin'd by a principle within him. This then is the worst of my meaning. That a Sinner is a reasonable Creature, and follows the determination of his own reason and judgement, in what he doth. And if man have not this liberty, I know not how he can be a sinner. He hath indeed no good will to what is of God, but the best part of him is enmity against it, *Ro.* 8.7. Yet he retains his *Liberum arbitrium*, though he hath lost *Facultatem ad bonum. The imaginations of mans heart, since the fall, are only and continually evil**. He hates the good, and loves the evil, but both freely. † *We have not lost our Free-will, but our Good-will.* Indeed we have too much Free-will, unless we could use it better; and this will be our condemnation, that we so willingly and wilfully refused the good, and chose the evil. * We cannot now will that which is our only good, but we freely and willingly refuse it. Man alone hath cast himself down:

Nos non alibi statuimus peccandi necessitatem, quam invitio voluntatis, unde spontaneam esse ipsam sequitur. Calv. de lib. arb. *Ex hoc enim quod ratio deliberans se habet ad opposita, voluntas in utrumque potest.* Aq. 12. Qu. 6. 2. *Solum id quod habet intellectum potest agere judicio libero in quantum cognoscit universalem rationem bonis ex quâ potest judicare hoc, vel illud esse bonum.* Aqu. p. 2. q. 59. c. 3. * Gen: 6: 5: † *Non amisimus naturam, sed gratiam.* * *Voluntas in naturâ, &c. à bono potest declinare, ut faciat malem, quod sit libero arbitrio: Et à malo, ut faciat bonum, quod non sit sine divino adjutorio:* August: de Civit: lib: 15. c: 21.

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down: But he cannot alone raise himself up again. *It is God that worketh in us, to will, and to do*, Philip. 2. 13. And in this *We are his workmanship*, Eph. 2. 10.

Tolle gratiam non est, quod salvet: Tolle liberum arbitrium, non est quod salvetur.

Therefore one hath resolv'd in this case (to my thinking) as well as can be: *Take away Grace, and there's nothing to save: Take away Free-will, there's nothing to be sav'd.* God gives all grace to all; but he gives not grace to any, but reasonable creatures. And when he gives that grace, which effectually changeth the heart, he no way infringeth mans liberty. For though it be granted, That God working the will to determine it self, it must determine accordingly; yet Gods working takes not from mans will the power of dissenting, and doing the contrary; but so inclineth it, as having liberty to do otherwise, yet it actually determineth one way, and not another. So mans Free-will is still preserv'd, since without it, I know not, how he can do any thing commendable, or blamcable. For what any man is enforc'd unto, is not his good, or evil. *Paul* saith indeed, That *he compell'd some to blaspheme*, Act. 26. 11. Which cannot be understood otherwise, than that he used all rigour and extremity to draw and drive them to it. But they were not purely compell'd, if so, the sin had been his, and not theirs. But they chose to blaspheme, rather than suffer; and this was their sin, which they would have avoided, had they been found in the Faith, as those Worthies mentioned *Heb.* 11. Though perhaps *Paul* speaks more his own endeavour, than the event or effect of it upon others.

Voluntas etiam a Deo cogi non potest, etsi possit ab illo de necessitate mutari, operando in illâ, sicut in naturâ: Aqu: 12: q: 6: Contra rationem ipsius actûs voluntatis est, quod sit coactus, &c: 12: Qu: 6: a: 4: C:

Here

Here by the way obſerve, What a great deluſion there is in the World, in and about this particular, *viz.* If men be ſtrongly tempted to ſin, by any ſore penalty threatned, and ready to be inflicted, they preſently call it a [FORCE] and perſwade themſelves, the ſin is only theirs, who compell'd them to it. This is a deluſion, for no man can be forc'd to ſin, though he may be ſtrongly tempted more wayes than one. For ſo farr as a man is forced, he doth not ſin.

The force of Temptation may make a man do, what elſe he would not: As a ſtorm cauſes the Mariners ſometimes to caſt their lading overboard. But the Caſuiſts reſolve all mixt actions of this kind, to be more free, than otherwiſe. Men would not indeed do ſuch things, if there were not ſome weighty conſideration moving them; yet they are not compell'd, for they might do otherwiſe.

Paſſiones animi non poſſunt cogere voluntatem, licet alit. moveant inclinando affectum: Aquin:

A man may be purely forc'd to do ſomewhat, that he would not; but his will cannot be forc'd without deſtroying the nature of it. As farr as a man wills or nills any thing, he wills or nills it freely, though the will hath (as moſt think) neceſſary dependance in its elicite acts, upon the underſtanding.

Obj. But though the Will be thus free, yet there is an unavoidable neceſſity on every man, in his natural eſtate, ſo as he cannot but ſin in all he doth: *For a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, Luc. 6. 43. *A man by nature is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*; Eph. 2. 1. Can a dead man raiſe himſelf to life again? *Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots?*

ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, who are a cuſtomed to do evil, Jer. 13. 23.

Sol. For what is urg'd from Scripture, I a farr from gainſaying it, becauſe it contradic not me; in ſaying, That every man ſins willing and wilfully. A man by nature is dead in ſi and ſay, The ſpiritually dead can no more ra themſelves to life, than they who are natura and corporally dead; Yet know, there is a va difference between the one, and the other. H that is ſpiritually dead, hath a will: But the n turally dead, hath none at all. The ſpiritua dead, ſhews a wicked will, in reſiſting t means uſed for his recovery; Whereas he tha naturally dead, cannot be ſaid to be unwilling t riſe again. A man in his ſin, is as a ſick ma yet the ſick in body, and the ſick in ſoul, are n in all alike. A man ſick in body, would with his heart riſe, if he could; and keeps his Be only, becauſe he is forc'd to it, and cannot ſit u A Soul-ſick man, let him be, as you will hav him, I am ſure, is as unwilling, as he is unabl to riſe. He is indeed like the Sluggard, tha will not riſe, becauſe of cold, finding his Be warm and eaſie. So is a ſinner, in his ſinf condition, he loves and likes it, and is loth t change. Nay, he will quarrel any one, tha goes about to rouze or raiſe him; he will not en dure any rebukes for ſin, but loves it, ſo as t hate any, that would divorce him from it. No is he as a block, or a beaſt: He ſees what is good as God hath ſhewed it him, and he abhorrs it and chuſes to abide in the condition wherein he is, as beſt for him.

And thus Scripture ſpeaks of mans weakneſs, as his wickedneſs, and his infirmity is his iniquity too. Take him as he is, and you will find him thus: He cannot will that which is good, becauſe he will not: His [CAN] and his [WILL] being all one. Such is his natural bent to evil, that he voluntarily chuſeth it, and refuſeth the good. And now let any man judge, Whether ſuch an inability can be any excuſe for ſin, it being at moſt but a moral Impotency (as we call it) and not a natural.

Hence (methinks) I cannot make good ſenſe of what ſome are wont to ſay, That they would repent, if they could. I ſuppoſe, it would be more ſenſe, to ſay, They would repent, if they would. For certain, If a man be heartily willing to repent, there is nothing left to hinder his repentance. *A ſerious and inſtant will to repent and believe, includes in it the hatred of ſin, and a purpoſe of not ſinning. He that truly deſires to repent, doth indeed repent, becauſe he hates his own evil wayes.* Perkins of Gods free-grace, and mans free-will.

I grant it willingly, That no man can turn to God, without the grace of God; but that is all one, as to ſay, No man will turn to God, without the grace of God. For there is nothing that hinders him, but his wicked, froward will. A man may have a charitable diſpoſition, and be heartily willing to relieve others in their neceſſities, and yet may not, becauſe he hath not wherewithall to do it. His heart may be large, when his eſtate is ſtrait enough. And in this caſe, the will is accepted for the deed. For almes-deeds are imperate, outward acts, wherein the

will cannot sway all; and therefore it may be rationally said of such a man, He would with all his heart, if he could. But to repent and believe are elicite, inward, immediate acts of the will, and are not exercised by another power, as the imperate are. *With the heart man believeth,* Ro. 10. and with the heart man repenteth. There is, I grant, an outward reformation of the life, which is a fruit of Repentance; but Repentance is a root in the heart, and when a man is changed, so as to hate the evil, and love the good: Or whenever a man of unwilling, is made willing, then he repents. And therefore it cannot be said with good sense, Men would repent, if they could: There's more sense, and truth too, in saying, Men could repent, if they would. To say, *I am willing to repent, but I cannot*, is all one, as to say, *I am willing to repent, but I will not.* I may be willing to work, or to walk; but because I am sick and weak in body, I cannot. But if I am willing to repent and believe, the work is done: For these are the immediate acts of my will.

Obj. But some may object, That many gracious Souls may heartily desire, what they cannot do; and Divines commonly resolve, That good desires are accepted with God, when there are failings in the performance.

Sol. I fully accord with all those Divines in this, and say, That the best on earth are defective in doing what they desire: Their desires are indeed beyond what they are able to do. They would pray with more fervency, and ardent affection; they would hear with more attention

tention and intention, than they do; and this is their great burden, that they cannot do as they would. But it must be considered too, That they are defective in their desires also, and then we may soon answer, what is here objected, *viz.* That as to the immediate acts of the will, they cannot what they would. For they would love God more than they do; and it is their burden, that they love him no more: And blessed (say I) are all such poor Souls, and I wish there were more of such in the world. For too many (I fear) think they love God well enough, and that in this, they are not wanting. But to answer the Objection, consider,

1. That the fervency of the Saints love to God, is much allayed by many things without them, such as are unavoidable to them, whiles they are in flesh.

2. All the defects of their love, and other spiritual affections, are from the imperfection of the work of grace; their wills being not so throughly sanctified, but that there is flesh lusting against the spirit. Hence, when *the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak*, so as they cannot do what they would. They cannot love God so, as they would love him. But this makes nothing against what I said before. For so farr as they are sanctified, they are willing; but so farr as they are flesh, they are not so. The spirit makes them willing, to what the flesh will not suffer them: and this is their burden, that they have so much of the body of death in and about them. But I say again, so farr as a mans heart is renewed, so farr he loves God; and the im- Mat. 26. 41.

perfection of his love, is from the defects of his will, not throughly and perfectly ſanctified and changed. But ſtill I am to ſeek, and cannot imagine, how any man can be willing to love God, and not actually love him at all; as certainly they that are carnally minded, do not. A man may not love God, ſo much as he would, and I have given a reaſon why. But I cannot apprehend, how a man can be willing to love God, and not love him at all. And the caſe is all one in Faith and Repentance. A man by nature loves not Chriſt, but loves his ſin; and this makes him diſtaſte the terms, upon which Chriſt is offered to him; and he is unwilling to believe on him, becauſe of the old hatred. This natural old enmity makes him unwilling to cloſe with Chriſt; but if that were once cured, he would forthwith believe, to the ſaving of his Soul. Now if it be mans enmity (as indeed it is) that makes him unable, conſider, I pray, how farr ſuch an inability will excuſe. I never heard, that any man was an enemy to another, againſt his will. There's no Vertue, or Gift of God in us, without our wills; and in every good act, Gods grace, and mans will concurr. *The voice of the corrupt will of man, is, I do that which is evil, and I will do it: I do not that which is good, and I will not do it.*

Perkins of Gods free grace, and mans free-will.

That which keeps men faſt bound in the cords of their ſins, is the frowardneſs of a wicked heart, wilfully chuſing to walk on in their ungodly wayes, and refuſing all means of reclaiming them.

Queſt.

Queſt. But how ſhall that enmity and wilfullneſs be removed? Or is it their fault, that it abides upon them? It hath been preach'd for ſound Doctrine, That a man can never repent, or believe, till God circumciſe the heart, and take away the ſtony heart, and give a new heart, and a new ſpirit.

Sol. And I do allow of this Doctrine with all my heart. But what then? All this will not clear us, if we do not repent. For our ſin is never the leſs ſinful, becauſe (as I ſaid before) we love it, and will by no means part with it. I ſubſcribe to what *Luther* ſaith: *Impius lubenti voluntate malum facit, & hæc eſt voluntas: Verum hanc lubentiam faciendi malum, non poteſt omittere, aut coercere, & hæc eſt neceſſitas.* I know well, that the infirmity of a natural man is great upon him, and invincible to any thing, but Almighty grace. But I know too, that a natural man loves his ſin with all his heart, and reſolves to ſerve his luſts, and will not be perſwaded to renounce them. And for the wayes of God, he hates and ſcorns them, and will not walk in them; Yea, and doth what he can, to keep up the old hatred, reſiſting all the aſſaults, that are made upon him, for the ſubduing of him to the obedience of Chriſts Laws. What think you? Is not every wicked man free, in making all the oppoſition that he can, againſt the means of his converſion? And now let any man ask himſelf, Whoſe fault it is, that he is an enemy to God, and the wayes of godlineſs: Or that he chuſeth the wayes of death, when he is often and earneſtly invited to walk in the way

Luth. de ſerv. arbit.

that leadeth unto life? What kind of queſtion is this? I wonder men are not aſhamed to aſk, How the enmity of their hearts againſt God ſhall be removed? They may anſwer themſelves if they pleaſe, thus, That they love their luſts, and for their luſts ſake they cannot abide Gods Laws. I ask them therefore in the Name of God, and let them anſwer as they ſhould, or (I aſſure them) they ſhall anſwer one day as they would not: Why do not all you prophane, ungodly, debauched men, leave your wicked wayes; and why are you ſo unwilling to leave them? Why do you ſlight, and ſet at naught, ſcorn and deride the wayes of God and godlineſs? I hope you will bluſh to ſay, You are forc'd to do ſo, when your hearts know, you take pleaſure in ſo doing. Is it not your delight and paſtime to do wickedly? And are not the wayes of God, the things you abhorr, and cannot abide? Are you reaſonable men, and can you ſay or think, you are neceſſitated and compell'd to take theſe vain and wicked courſes, when your own hearts know, you love them, and chuſe them, and will not be perſwaded to the contrary?

Hence I ſay further, That I cannot believe, God will damn any man, for doing that, which he was heartily unwilling to have done, but could not, or was not able to refrain. I believe alſo, That God will damn no man, for not doing the good, which he was heartily willing to have done, but could not. And I believe, all men

Neq; enim ſic neceſſariò peccare impios dicimus quia voluntariâ deliberatâ que malitiâ peccent. Calvin de lib. arb. contra Pighium, in 2 lib.

ſhall

ſhall be condemn'd for this, That they would not walk in Gods wayes, and for that they would goe on in their own wayes. And if the whole tenour of Scripture ſpeak not this, I may be aſham'd to underſtand it no better. And to ſay no more, I confeſs my ſelf unable to conceive, the righteouſneſs of God in his Judgements, if he ſhould paſs ſentence of death and condemnation upon any poor Souls, that have been ſincerely willing to do what he commanded, and only wanted ſtrength and ability to do it. *The natural man cannot know ſpiritual things*: But 'tis alſo ſaid, They are fooliſhneſs to him, and he ſcorns them. 1 Cor. 2. 14.

As to what is alledged from *Jer.* 13. 23. I anſwer, There is ſo great a diſſimilitude, as the Argument *a Simili* will not hold, to prove what is pretended. The *Æthiopian*, though he be never ſo willing, cannot change his skin. Hence we ſay of a man that labours in vain, that he is waſhing a *Blackmore*. And the *Leopards* ſpots are of the ſame nature. But the wickedneſs of the wicked is not ſo. I am apt to think, many a *Blackmore* would be made white, if he could: But no wicked man is willing to be made clean. I have heard indeed (how true it is I know not) that the blackeſt *Æthiopians* with them, are the beauties, even as the faireſt are with us. Now if a *Blackmore* might change his skin, and would not, I ſhould think him to be a juſt and fit reſemblance of ungodly ſinners. For theſe *Æthiopians* (as I may call them) are not willing to change their skins: Such black Souls will not be made white. Nay, the blacker they are, the Obj. from *Jer.* 23. anſwer'd.

Jer. 9. 6. They have taught, *&c. i. e.* enured, or accuſtomed themſelves, they have got ſuch an habit and cuſtome of ſinning, that they cannot leave it.

better they ſeem in their own eyes; and the deeper they are dipt in that dye, the more they are pleas'd with their black hue. And let it be obſerv'd, what that Text hath *in terminis*: *How can ye that are accuſtomed*, &c. Or, *Ye that have learnt, and are inſtructed?* For the Original hath in it the notion of teaching or learning. They had enur'd themſelves to do evil. Old Sinners accuſtom'd to their wicked wayes, are as one that hath learnt what he cannot forget. And yet if a man learn any thing that's bad and baſe, he is never the more commended, nor yet the leſs blam'd, becauſe he cannot forget it. A cuſtome in evil is farr worſe, than the firſt ſingle act of ſin.

And I have yet one Conſideration more, that will clear this matter beyond all exception, and it is this, That the more unable any man is to repent, the more hateſull he is in the ſight of God. Cuſtome in ſin, draws a cruſt upon Conſcience, hardens the heart, and makes a man more unable to repent. And will any man ſay, That ſuch an obdurate Sinner, is therefore the more excuſable? Nay, he is the more abominable, even for that reaſon, in the ſight of God and man. The more ſick and weak in body any one is, the more he is pitied, becauſe men know, he would be better if he could, and is glad to hear of any good means to recover him. But we cannot ſo pity Sinners, that have an hard and impenitent heart; but account them therefore the greater Sinners, becauſe they cannot repent. They cannot indeed, becauſe they will not; and their greater inability is nothing, but

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their greater obſtinacy and malignity; ſo as the beſt that can be made of it, is no more, than if a Thief ſhould plead for himſelf at the barr, That he hath been us'd to filching and ſtealing ſo long, as he cannot leave it. The ſame Plea it is for any man to ſay, I have ſinn'd ſo long, and am ſo much hardned, as I cannot repent. And though every Sinner be not alike hardned in ſin, yet every one hath the ſame inclination, which by frequent and continued exerciſe, will become a cuſtome. For the difference of Sinners is much in degrees; and if the impotency of an old Sinner be no plea, neither will the impotency of any.

Obj. If any yet ſay, It is no fault of ours, that we are ſo much inclin'd to evil, and ſo averſe to God, and all that's good,

Sol. I hope they will remember, *That God made man righteous*, or upright, *Eccl. 7. ult.* And that we are now born in ſin, is the corruption of our nature, for which we are beholden to our ſelves, as much as *Adam* was to himſelf, for his firſt tranſgreſſion, and falling from God. For we ſinn'd as well as he, and then contracted the guilt and filth we now lye under, even before we are born. And ſo much the Apoſtle averrs plainly, *Ro.* 5. 12. which if it be denied, all the Apoſtles Argument in that place, to prove the Lord Chriſt to be our Righteouſneſs, will be of little force, or rather none at all, as I conceive, with ſubmiſſion to better judgements.

Obj. If it be ſaid, Man had never fallen at firſt, if God had not left him to himſelf?

Sol. I anſwer, That God did not firſt leave man, but man firſt left God; and judge, if it were

[They] *i: e:* Mankind: It was not *Adams* ſin alone; ſo ſome underſtand it.

Posse quod voluit. *Velle quod potuit:*

were not so: For God gave him a power to stand, if he himself would: If he gave him not will to use that power, is God to be faulted for that? Would you have God to make him unchangeable?

Obj. But Man might have stood unmoveable though he had not been made unchangeable, if God had upheld him, as he did the elect Angels.

Sol. No question, but God could, and might have upheld him; but he was not pleased so to do. And yet he is not to be charged with the fall of man. For he gave him sufficient power and strength to stand, if he would, and was not this enough? If a Father gives his Son a stock of Money, or an Estate, whereupon he may live comfortably, by his good management of it; and the Son do (as we read of one *Luc.* 15.) spend and waste all, and come to beggery; can any man justly say, the Father did not his part for his Sons good? What would men have of God? Or what they make of him? God made Man a glorious Creature, and gave him a reasonable Soul, and liberty to chuse for himself, such as no other earthly Creature had. And when God had made him a reasonable Creature, He dealt with, and by him, as became the nature and quality of such a Creature. If God had divested Man of his Liberty, he had abas'd his Nature below it self, and indeed made him to be no Man, or reasonable Creature.

Obj. But God might have preserv'd him in the estate, wherein he was first made, holy and righteous.

Sol.

Sol. What will men make of God? We read how ill God takes it, to be *thought such a one as we are*, Psal. 50. 21. The men that argue thus, do much worse. For they would make God to be such, as they themselves would not be. They will not be tyed up to the wills of other men, (though perhaps better than themselves) in every transaction, or concernment of their own. They will say, Why should we be bound to them? These are our own concernments, and why should we give others an account of them? May not we do with our own, as we will? And no man questions such men for their doings, specially so long, as nothing is done, but what is comely and equall. But when the great and mighty God doth any thing like, and disposeth of his Creatures with infinite wisdome, vain men will presently question, Why doth he so? Let any man shew any the least unrighteousness in God, or that man could not have preserved himself, in that blessed estate, wherein God had set him, and then they say somewhat. But the contrary is most certain and true, *viz.* That Man might, and should have been happy, if he had not wilfully cast himself away. And therefore, *Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts, with our hands, unto God in the Heavens. We have transgressed and rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned*, Lam. 3. 39, 40, 41, 42. Nothing becomes us in our sinfull condition, so well as such a confession. Do we believe, there is a God that made us, and dare we question

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on his dealings, as if he puniſh'd us upon any account, but our tranſgreſſions? *Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgement*, Job 34. 12. And *v.* 11. You have an Argument for it: *The work of a man ſhall he render unto him, and cauſe every man to find according to his wayes.* Had man continued in his obedience, ; or being fallen, humbled himſelf and then God had rejected him, there might have been ſuppos'd ſome occaſion of complaining. But it is quite otherwiſe: For God ran after man, when man had run away from him; and provided for his recovery, to a more bleſſed and glorious eſtate, when he could think of nothing but a few figg leaves to cover his ſhame. And God is ſtill reaching out his merciful armes, to lay hold on him, inviting and wooing him, and never refuſeth any Soul, that turns to him; and what would men have more?

Obj. But if it be ſaid, I cannot, in the caſe I am, turn my ſelf:

Sol. I ſay thou lyeſt in what thou ſayeſt: For to ſpeak as it is, thou art not willing to turn unto the Lord; and this, and nothing elſe, will be thy condemnation in the great day of account. There is a price paid, and a purchaſe made, and thou art invited to come, and take poſſeſſion of it. But thou hadſt rather abide where thou art, and holdeſt thy ſins as Sweet-meats under thy tongue, and wilt not let them goe, though thou haſt been often told, they will be the bane of thy Soul. And how dar'ſt thou ſay, Thou canſt not turn thy ſelf, when God, and thine own Heart, and the World too, know, thou art enamour'd

* *Coffet voluntas propria, & non erit Infernus*: There would be no Hell, but for our wicked will.

nour'd on thy ſin, and haſt ſuch a liking to it, e. thou wilt by no means be perſwaded to part with it? Wilt thou wilfully proſecute thy ſinful deſigns and courſes; and ſet thine heart upon thine iniquity, and ſay, Thou canſt not turn from it? For ſhame ſpeak ſenſe, and talk no more ſo abſurdly. Will a man be at coſt and pains to ſerve and feed his luſts, and he not love them? And if thou love them, they have thy will; and when thou art willing to part with them (I ſay) heartily willing, the work of Converſion is done. But whilſt thou art not willing to part with thy luſts, ſay as it is, *I will not, I will not.* Say the truth, for ſo it is. Thou hadſt rather part with thy Soul for ever, than part with the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon. Thou delighteſt in thy own wayes, and art one of them that *ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* It is not with ungodly ones, as they pretend: For they chuſe their own wayes, and when they eat the fruits of them, they are but filled with their own devices. They firſt ſow iniquity, and then reap ſhame and miſery. When they goe down to Hell, they goe where they had a mind to be. They have been often and earneſtly call'd upon, to pity and favour their poor Souls, but they would not be perſwaded. How many a Sinner hath parted with his life for his luſts ſake? And all do ſo, as to their Souls. If men would ſtudy Scripture more, and ſearch their own hearts more, than they do, they would ſoon anſwer their own Arguments. Let me now commend to them one place, *viz. Pro.* 1. from *v.* 20. to

Job 21.14

the

the end of the Chapter; and let them consid
what the wisdome of God judgeth, concern
the wicked wayes of men. And O! that m
would read, and weigh our Saviours word
Joan. 3. 19, 20. *This is the condemnation, th
light is come into the world, and men loved dar
dess rather than light, because their deeds were
vil.* Christ, and his Word, and all his Ord
nances, are a Light; and wicked men, li
Thieves, cannot abide them, because the
would not be discovered by them. This is t
judgement, that Scripture passeth upon ungod
men; and if they would pass the same, and
judge and condemn themselves, they might fi
peace in approaching to God. But to argue a
whartle about the wayes of Gods Providence a
Grace, as if they were not equal; when God
and their own hearts know, they are passionat
ly in love with, yea and madd upon their Idol
I mean their Lusts, and loose practices; t
will turn to no good account one day, whatev
men count of now. They that are so apt t
quarrel God, should rather call themselves to
account, and if they would be exact in this wor
we should have more complaints of themselve
that their own wayes are unequal, and all th
wayes of God most equal, and just, and good
To shut up this, I shall only mention one Text,
Pro. 8. 36. *All that hate me, love death.* The
are the words that were spoken by the infinit
and eternal Wisdome of God; who saith a
much in effect, *Joan.* 3. 19, 20. before cited
Wicked men love darkness, and death. The
are not damn'd (as they pretend) to Sin and
Hell

Hell againſt their wills; but they love them, and chuſe them, when they might forbear and avoid them. They love their Sins, and therefore hate their Souls: They love Sin, and in ſo doing love Death: They are willing to be damn'd, as willing (for certain) as a man that wittingly takes poyſon, is willing to kill himſelf.

Non appetitu naturali, aut per electionem, ſed in naturâ. Aquin.

Obj. But ſome will ſay, That few are ſo willfull, till God hardens them, and makes them to erre from his wayes, *Eſay* 63. 17.

Sol. For Gods making men to erre, *&c.* I think the Learned Annotator hath rightly obſerv'd, That the Original notes only a permiſſion, and therefore might be rendred, *Why doſt thou ſuffer us to wander out of thy wayes? For God tempteth no man to ſin*, Jac. 1. 13, 14. *But a man is led away by his own luſt.* And how did God harden *Pharaoh?* No other way, than by delivering him up, and leaving him to the hardneſs of his own obſtinate heart, by Gods forbearance and mercy, more and further obdurated, as is to be ſeen in the Story. God doth thus harden others, and leave them to themſelves; and then it is ſad with them, as it is with a Child left to himſelf, *Pro.* 29. 15. But when is it? Even when they give themſelves up to ſerve their own deſires, and reſolve to walk after their luſts, hating to be reformed, and caſting Gods Word behind them, as is to be ſeen, *Pſa.* 81. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. This is cleared from *Pſa.* 95. 8. *Harden not your heart.* On which place *Calvin*: *Non ex alio fonte manare noſtram adverſus Deum rebellionem, quam ex voluntaria improbitate dum illius gratiæ aditum obſtruimus.* Calv.

Calv. *i. e.* Our rebellion againſt God, flows fro
no other fountain, than our own perverſne
whilſt we ſhut up the paſſage to his grace, that
cannot enter.

One thing more, that may be objected, m
be anſwer'd, and 'tis this:

Obj. That the ſpecial Grace of God puts th
laſt difference between man and man (as ſom
ſay) and that Grace is not given to all. Ho
then can it be ſaid, That God hath ſufficient
provided for all? Or how can he be clear'd,
his condemning ſome, ſeeing theſe alſo wou
have repented, and cloſed with Chriſt, if t
Lord had perſwaded, and over-power'd the
by his effectual Grace, as he did others?

Sol. And yet God will clear himſelf; and f
this purpoſe conſider,

1. That there is little more in this Objectio
than in ſomewhat before, about the Fall of o
firſt parents. And as God was righteous in le
ting them fall, becauſe they might have ſtood,
they would: So God is righteous in his dealin
with men, notwithſtanding he deny them th
ſpecial Grace, he gives to others, becauſe the
might be ſaved, if they would. When I ſay
Men may be ſaved, if they will, my meaning i
That they are not ſaved, becauſe they will no
and that their wilfullneſs is their condemnation
For if Chriſt, and the Word of Grace revealin
Chriſt, and all the Methods of conveying him t
poor Souls, and Exhortations, and entreaties t
accept of him, be enough, then God is no
wanting on his part. For I may now ask a
who complain, What is lacking to them more

Were

Were there not an all-ſufficient Saviour, and ſufficient means of knowing him to Salvation, there might be perhaps ſome occaſion of complaint. But it is farr otherwiſe; and if men will make uſe of theſe means, as they are commanded and intreated to do, I am ſure, they ſhall be ſaved, becauſe the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. Never did any man dye in his ſins, that was heartily willing to receive Chriſt offer'd to him, and to improve the means of grace allowed him for that end. And may I not then ſay, Men may be ſaved, if they will? They have enough to live upon for ever; and when they play the Unthrifts part, have they any cauſe to blame God, and ſay, He might have done more for them? What ſhould he have done more for them? And what can they anſwer to this queſtion, when their own hearts know, they never lik'd or lov'd Chriſt, or any of his wayes; but wilfully ſcorn'd and rejected all? They lik'd and lov'd a Saviour to deliver them from Death and Hell, after they had taken their full ſwinge in their own wayes, and ſinn'd themſelves out of breath, and could no longer ſerve their luſts. But they would not have Chriſt to reign over them, ſo, as for his ſake, and at his command, to deny themſelves, and all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts. They know, that the Power of Godlineſs was the thing their Souls loathed, and they ſcorn'd it, as ſavouring of nothing but folly and fancy, calling it a Preciſian nicety. And when Chriſt called them to ſuffer for his ſake, (who ſuffered ſo much to ſave their Souls) they would not part with a penny, or loſe an hair of

their head for him. I say then, in one word; Look what hindred *Israel* from seeing the good Land which God had promised them, the same hinders these men from possessing the Heavenly Inheritance, *Heb.* 3. *ult.* *They could not enter in, because of unbelief*; And yet, as *Moses* tells them, *Deut.* 9. 4. *The Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear.*

2. How would men have God to save them? Would they be saved in such a way, as if a Block should be lifted from the Earth, and carried up to Heaven? This cannot be, without perverting the whole course of Gods Providence, in governing his reasonable Creatures. For they being made after Gods Image, and acting by an inward Principle of Reason, must be governed in a way and manner suitable to their Nature. God indeed draws men thitherward; but I never read, he drives them against their wills, or without their privity, *Hos.* 2. 14. *I will allure her*, &c. *Though Conversion be not altogether suspended on the liberty of mans will, but God undertakes for it; yet his way is sweet, and taking with Sinners, who are allured*, as one observes on the place. God by Grace destroyes not Nature, but rectifies and perfects it, whiles (as *Austin* saith) *Omnipotenti facilitate ex nolentibus facit volentes.* He bends and enclines mens hearts, as the Rivers of Water, *Pro.* 21. 1. Now Water, that runs one way, may be turned, and made to run another way: But the Water in its course, alwayes runs according to its natural inclination. Certainly, the worst these men can say of God, is, That he would

would have turned them, and they would not be turned; but they resisted him, in all his strivings with them. And then where lyes the fault? Let any reasonable man judge.

3. This Argument (as I said before) aimes at making God to be not only such a one as our selves, but much lower.

4. God is just, as well as mercifull; and his Justice is as natural, and as essential to him, as his mercy. And if so, Why (I pray) may not God glorifie himself in the one, as well as in the other? If he may not, give some reason, Why. But if God may glorifie his Justice, as well as his Grace, I ask, How God can glorifie it more, beyond all exception, otherwise than thus, *viz.* In destroying those who have had all means sufficient to save them, and willingly rejected all, because they did not like them?

5. I have yet somewhat more to say, in answer to this Objection; and it is so much, as (I hope) may satisfie any, that are soberly minded. They who thus argue, might do well to consider, What that Grace is, which (they say) is not given them. For that Grace, where-ever it comes in its full power and efficacy, sets men at the greatest distance, yea and defiance with all their wonted sinful wayes. Now here may be a great mistake; and these men may seem to desire, they themselves know not what. I believe, they would fain have the Grace of God, to preserve them from suffering Hell-torments, when they are going out of the World, never again to serve the desires of their flesh. But do they desire indeed, to shake hands with, and to bid an ever-

lasting Farewell to their filthy Lusts, so long as they have any ability or opportunity to serve them? For to this the Grace of God calls them, and for this they have had many gracious earnest invitations, which they have sufficiently slighted, and cast off, with as much scorn and contempt as could be. They have never heeded what they have heard from God himself, speaking and calling to them, by the Commands, Promises, and Threatnings of his written Word, or by the motions of his Spirit, or the checks of their own Consciences, or any Dispensations of his, in any Providences. Now, what do these men mean, in saying, God hath not given them grace, when they slight and set at naught all the saving Methods, which he makes use of, to affect their hearts, and work them over to a thorough-compliance with himself? Why do not they attend their own work, which is, to heed what God commands, promises, and threatens in his Word, and to reform their hearts and lives accordingly? Why do they not lament and bewail the baseness of their own sinfull hearts and natures, humbly acknowledging all their iniquities, and loathing themselves, because they are loathsome in the sight of the Lord? Why do they not confess and forsake their sins, that so they may find mercy, as *Solomon* assures them, *Pro.* 28. 13. Why do they not begg of God strength to resist Sin, and use the means which God hath ordered for that end, *viz.* Fasting and beating down their bodies? Why do not they avoid the occasions of Sin, and keep themselves farr from those places and companies, where

where they are sure to meet with many temptations? Why do they not frequent the company of those, who will admonish them upon all occasions, and advise them about ordering all their wayes? No, They'l do nothing of what is their duty, nor what (I am sure they have power to do, but only sin, and seek all occasions to sin; and then quarrel God, and say, He hath not given them grace. This is in effect to say, They would have God to save them against their wills.

Obj. But God can make me willing, if he please.

Sol. I know God hath a Soveraign power over the hearts of all men, but what then? Would they have God to alter all the saving Methods of his grace, and force upon them, what they have refus'd so often, with all disdain and indignation imaginable? They desire no grace, but what may keep them out of Hell: And scorn all grace that's offered them, for reforming their hearts and lives. They are like those froward Patients, that would have their Physicians cure them, without any applications made to them; as our Saviour heal'd the lame, and the blind, by a word of his mouth, working wonders, such as had not been heard or known. Not to say, that such arguings are absurd and unreasonable, These men must have low thoughts of God, and his infinite Excellencies, who would have him shape the whole course and method of his Grace and Providence, according to their sinfull Interests and Humours. To say no more, make it our own case. When once we have done our endeavours,

us'd all intreaties, yea, and (it may be) added due corrections to our instructions and admonitions, and waited long for a desirable issue, knowing the Party we have to deal with, might, if he had a mind, change his course; we think we can acquit and clear our selves (as indeed we may) before all the World, from having any hand in his undoing himself. And will not the righteous Judge (think we) acquit himself at the last day, in condemning all the ungodly refusers and despisers of his Grace and Mercy? I shall say no more, but as God said to *Job*, *He that reproveth God, let him answer it.* As if he should say, *He that reasons the case* (so the word may well be rendred) *or argues against me, Let him answer, if he can, what I have said, and have yet to say. Thou* Job *hast been very bold and forward to question and quarrel my wayes of Providence, as if they were not such as they should be. But I would have thee know, I am able to guide and govern the World, without any assistance or advice of thine. Hast thou so mean, low, and unworthy thoughts of me, and mine infinite Excellencies, as to imagine, I am to learn of thee, or any other, how to order and dispose the works of my hands? I think, I have said enough to convince thee: But if this do not satisfie thee, I have yet more to say, and beware in time to provoke me no further, for if thou do, thou shalt be sure to know after another manner, that I will not be taught by thee.* So I shall answer no more, but only advise all who thus argue, to read how *Job* answered the Lord, and to give over such malepert daring him, with their disputing his Royal Prerogatives;

Job 40.2.

Job 40. 4, 5.

gatives, which if they considered, as they should they would count such reasonings but a little beneath blasphemies.

I shall only say further, Though we may awhile plead our weakness, yet God, and our Consciences know, it is only our wickedness, that hinders our Salvation. For my part, I, and others too, can say very much of our weakness, that when we have promised fairly many times, we have performed little or nothing answerable. But we can say much more of our natural wickedness, and the baseness of our deceitfull hearts. Others may speak as they list, I think it best and safest for me, and every one else, to shame our selves before the Lord, by charging home upon our selves the frowardness of a deceitful naughty heart. For this we may know, if we have a mind to it, That we love sin too much, when it is best with us; and God too little, when we love him most; and whom can we blame for this, but our selves? Therefore, God forbid, I should entertain the least thought of charging God foolishly. Let me ever say, God hath not been wanting to me, only I have been wanting to my self. I dare not say, I would be, or do better, if I could; seeing God, and my Conscience know, I could be, and do better, if I would. It is not any fault in God, but my self, that I have no more grace, and that I walk not more uprightly and evenly. For I do willingly yield too often to the suggestions and insinuations of Sin and Satan: And I do not entertain and cherish the sweet motions of Gods Spirit, nor improve the means of growing in

grace, as I might, and ought to do. And, in a word, I am verily perſwaded, if any thing undo me, it is the frowardneſs of an evil heart of unbelief. *In hac fide vivo, in hac moviar.* So let me juſtifie God, both in life and death, whatever becomes of me.

And now I remember, what I before referr'd to this place, concerning an Objection, that is commonly made to this purpoſe.

Obj. That all Exhortations to Faith and Repentance are abſurd and vain, if men are unable to do any thing of themſelves, without the effectual Grace of God over-powering them.

Sol. I ſhall ſay nothing of the Anſwers, that have been made to this Objection by others: But only ſay, There is no ſuch abſurdity, as is imagin'd, becauſe men are exhorted to that which they are unwilling to do. Now what abſurdity is there in this? Or if there be, I am not able to ſee it. Nor can I apprehend it unreaſonable, to perſwade a man to that, which is for his good, when we find him not willing to it. For mans natural inability to any ſpiritual good, I do not queſtion it, if we count of it, as I ſaid before, and as (I think) we ought. But I know full well, that mans weakneſs is his wickedneſs, and his inability is his untowardlineſs; and how can we deal with a froward wilfull man more rationally, than to lay before him the errour, and the evil of his way; and by reaſoning the caſe, perſwade him to leave it? They, whom we deal with, are men, and have reaſon, whereby they are able to judge of what is ſpoken to them; and they can diſcern of good and evil, and ſo chuſe,

as

as they ſee cauſe. And when the moſt is made, that can be, of mans inſufficiency, we cannot (as I ſhew'd formerly) deny him a liberty. And then, where (I pray) lies the abſurdity? Deny a natural man that liberty, which (as I ſaid before) muſt be allowed, I muſt confeſs, that to admoniſh or exhort him, is all one, as to exhort or perſwade a beaſt, or a block. But ſo long as wicked men do wilfully refuſe the wayes of God, and as wilfully goe on in the wayes of their own hearts, I am bold to think, the abſurdity will lye at their doors, who ſay, it is abſurd, to perſwade a wicked man, to turn from his evil wayes. And how much leſs abſurdity is there, in exhorting thoſe, in whom *the ſpirit is willing, though the fleſh is weak*?

And now I ſhall proceed to prove by other Arguments, That men are wilfull in their own wayes, and willingly neglect the things of their peace, and ſo periſh only upon that account, and no other.

Arg. 2. MY next Argument ſhall be, from the equity and reaſon that is and appears in all things, which concern mens Salvation, ſo as it is eaſily diſcernable by mans natural light and underſtanding. Men (as you have ſeen before) are apt to quarrel God for his dealings, as if his wayes were not equall: And my deſign is to prove them alone guilty of their own deſtruction, and that they ſhall one day appear ſo to their own Conſciences, and before all the World.

World. And my Argument is this, That all th wayes of God towards men, and all the mean he useth for the reclaiming of them, are so ra tional, even to mens natural understanding, t they can have no cause to quarrel any but them selves. And you may draw the Argument int a narrower compass thus: *If all the counse and wayes of God, and his methods about me Salvation, be equitable to the apprehension of sou reason in men themselves, then they can lay th blame of their destruction upon nothing besides the unreasonable, wilfull, and peevish dispositio* This I intend to exemplifie in some Particulars and add further, That all the Sins of men, fo which they are damn'd, are against Natural Re son, as well as against Divine Revelation.

But before I proceed, let me premise the Re son, for which I urge this Argument: And it this, Because God, to clear himself, doth eve and anon appeal to men; which he doth, be cause he knows, that the Reason and Conscienc of men, when they are put to it, must give evi dence on his side. To mention one Text, tha was hinted before somewhere, *Esay* 5. 3, 4. *Judge, I pray you* (saith God) *between me, and my Vineyard.* Who are the Parties appeal'd un to in that case? If you look, you shall find none other than the Delinquents themselves, *The men of* Judah, *and the Inhabitants of* Jerusalem. Why so? Even because God knew, that nothing could be pleaded, wherefore he should come short of what he expected; but the case was so clear, as he would leave the Delinquents themselves to be Judges. Surely God would not do thus, if he knew

knew not, that he hath a witneſs for himſelf in every mans Conſcience; and that his wayes are rational and equal, even when men themſelves are Judges.

And now I make this challenge in Gods name and behalf, Shew he that can, what in all the counſels and wayes of God, is diſſonant or contrary to right and ſound Reaſon. My meaning is this, There is nothing in any of them, but what by ſound natural Reaſon, a man may apprehend to be equal, righteous, and rational.

And yet in all this, I ſhall (I hope) keep my ſelf free, and farr enough from over-magnifying of mans Reaſon; and alſo from any thought, that the corruption of mans Nature is not in his Underſtanding, as well, and as much, as in his other faculties. I willingly grant, what I heartily believe, That we are all born blind, and that Ignorance is no ſmall part of mans inbred corruption, and Original Sin. Notwithſtanding, I ſay again, That natural Reaſon in men, is Light enough to deſcry, that the wayes of God, and all his tranſactions with men, are reaſonable; that is, None of them are againſt reaſon, though ſome of them be infinitely farr above it. And now I come to particular Inſtances.

Firſt, I inſtance in ſuch things, as God hath offer'd us in his Word, to be believed by us.

1. And what one among all thoſe ſeems more incredible and irrational, than the Reſurrection? Yet the Apoſtle thus reaſons, *Act.* 26. 8. *Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that*

that God ſhould raiſe the dead? The Apoſtle (yo
ſee) makes ſtrange of it, that any of the
ſhould ſtrange at it, as a thing incredible.
confeſs, he had then to deal with the *Jews*, a
ſuch as own'd the *Jewiſh* Religion (at leaſt m
ny of them) and therefore might well ask the
the queſtion, becauſe the whole Worſhip
God, upheld amongſt them, was an unreaſon
ble thing, if the Dead ſhould never riſe ag
But (as I take it) he might as well queſtion
Gentiles, after the ſame manner. Though
know, ſome may reply, That there is not
ſame reaſon, becauſe the *Gentiles* might
they did) exerciſe ſome Religion (ſuch a
was) upon the account of the Souls immortali
whilſt they believed no reſurrection of the B
dy. And that ſome of them had ſome Not
of the Souls immortality, without any app
henſion of the riſing again of the Body, I do
much queſtion; though thoſe Notions, in all
them, were but empty conceits, and as con
ſed as a ſick mans dreams. But this I deſire
be obſerv'd, That the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 15.
argues the Reſurrection thus, That if the D
riſe not, the Epicures Opinion may take plac
But that Opinion is erroneous (ſaith the Ap
ſtle) and pernicious too, and not to be allow
among Chriſtians, who ought to believe firm
the Reſurrection of the Dead. The Apoſt
Argument is *à Conſequente abſurdo*, and he ſa
in effect this, If there be no Reſurrection, th
might then ſide with the Epicures, and ſi
their † Song, Let us take our pleaſure while w
live, for after death we ſhall have none. Ye
obſerv

* The *Platoniks*, though far wide from the mark, as *Beza in arg. Pſal.* 90. obſerves.

† *Ede, bibas, ludas, poſt mortem nulla voluptas.*

obſerve alſo, *v.* 32. *If after the manner of men*, that is, as farr as men could do, or with regard only to this preſent life, which all men live, *I have fought with beaſts at* Epheſus, *what advantageth it me, if the Dead riſe not?* Doth not the Apoſtle lay the ground-work and foundation of *all Religion, upon the Reſurrection? It is as much as to ſay, What need I ſuffer, and (by the ſame reaſon) what need I do any thing about Religion, if there be no Reſurrection? His whole Argument is grounded upon Reaſon, and his Concluſion is the abſurdity of Religion, if there be no Reſurrection. And that it is ſo, appears from his reaſoning, *v.* 36. *Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickned, except it dye.* Where *Calvin* obſerves, *That the Apoſtle might have anſwer'd their Queſtion,* [*How are the Dead raiſed,* &c.] *by ſhewing, how eaſie it is to God Almighty, though it ſeem incomprehenſible to us, and that we are not to judge of ſuch things by our own ſenſe, but according to his infinite power.* But the Apoſtle anſwereth otherwiſe, by ſhewing, That the Reſurrection is ſo farr from contradicting the courſe of Nature, as we have continually a clear proof and inſtance of it, in the fruits of the earth, which ariſe and grow out of the ſeeds that are ſown, and rot in the ground. Now ſeeing all Generation is from Corruption, in the ſeed ſown, we have therein an image and reſemblance of the Reſurrection. And the effect of all the Apoſtles diſcourſe is this, That there is as much reaſon for the bodies riſing again, as there is for the growing again of the grain we ſow in the earth. And hence he rebukes them thus,

Thou

Humanæ vitæ reſpectu, ita ut nobis conſtet præmium in hoc mundo. Calv.

*Not this, or that, but all.

Thou fool, confuting Atheists from the course
Nature, as men that have not common sense. A
if he should say, How unreasonable are you,
question the Resurrection, when the like thing
before you every day, and you see with you
eyes ordinarily, what is as strange as that? Fro
the whole (to say no more) it is clear, Th
there is a ground in reason, for every man to b
lieve the Resurrection; though I deny not, th
it is further clear'd, and we are most confirm
in the belief of it, by the written Word; ye
and that our blind Reason would never have di
cover'd it, without Divine Revelation.

2. The Incarnation of the Son of God, is
thing (I confess) above all mans Reason, a
yet not therefore against Reason.

3. The Apostle stands admiring, *O the depth*, &c
Ro. 11. 33 *How unsearchable are his judgements, and*
wayes past finding out! And yet whoever believ
these, as they are by the Spirit revealed in th
Word, doth nothing but what is most rationa
For if there be one Almighty, Infinite, Eterna
God, (as *Socinians*, I hope, grant) then
is most absurd to think, that his judgements
wayes, works, and counsels are such, as can b
measured by the standard of mans reason. No
reason will perswade a man to measure what
infinite, by that which is finite, more than t
think of taking up the Ocean in a Nut-shell. An
if it should be thought, that the *Socinians* hav
the advantage at Reason against us (if it were
not for Scripture) in the highest Mysteries o
Divinity, I thing otherwise, because it is against
all reason, to allow of nothing in the counsels and

wayes

wayes of God, that is not commensurable with mans understanding. For that is all one, as to make him such a one as our selves; whereas our owning him as God, is an acknowledgement of his Beeing and Excellencies infinite beyond all our Reason.

4. Reason is not able to apprehend the Mystery of the Trinity: And yet it is but reasonable for us to believe, what Scripture hath reveal'd about it, because it is agreeable to Reason, that God must be such an Essence and Existence, as no Creature is able to comprehend. For God were not God indeed, nor like himself, if his Subsistence were such as we could apprehend. Even Reason will enforce us to grant, That God can be comprehended by none but himself. For how can a man apprehend God aright, without apprehending him infinite? That which is finite, even in the judgement of Reason, cannot be God. And therefore the Heathens were most absurd in their Polytheism, or multiplicity of Gods, because there can be but one infinite, and so but one God. Now the true God being indeed such, it is unreasonable in us to think, by searching, to find him out in his Essence, Subsistence, or Attributes. And for this purpose, let it be considered, what the Apostle saith concerning mans Reason, when it is us'd about the things of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. How should a beast understand the things of a man, and how much less can a man understand the things of God? I think I may rationally say, He must be a God, that knows perfectly what God is. True, we may understand what he hath revealed for our learning;

learning, but our understanding is according to his revealing it, only by our Faith, which sees that which Reason cannot discern; and yet our Faith is not unreasonable: For we can give a reason of our believing such things, as God hath revealed, *viz.* Infallible, Divine Authority, though we cannot give a reason of some things believed by us. And there is nothing more reasonable, than to believe, whatever God saith to be true; though we can give no reason more than that God saith it. For a God that can lye, Reason it self will say, is not, cannot be God, but an Idol, or a Devil. And hence I infer, That Reason teacheth us to believe the higher Mysteries revealed in Scripture, as the Trinity, the Incarnation, *&c.* and they that think otherwise, therein shew themselves unreasonable. And for the Counsels of God, in disposing of his Creatures according to his pleasure, what reasonable man can question them? Or if any man do it, may it not justly and rationally be said to him, as *Elihu* spake unto *Job*? *Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth no account of his matters.* Job 33. 12, 13. And if so, it is indeed most unreasonable in any man to expect it. Certainly, if any, God may challenge this Prerogative, *viz.* To give no account of his wayes and counsels. And for men to pry into them, further than he hath reveal'd; and demand a reason of his will and pleasure, when he is pleas'd to give none, is indeed to do against Reason. For there is nothing more reasonable than this, That God may do what he pleaseth,

pleaseth, and not to be question'd by any for it, seeing all things else are the works of his hands. And this was the Apostles mind, when he said, *Ro.* 9. 20, 21. *Nay but O man, who art thou, that replyest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the clay*, &c. And doth not the Prophet (whom the Apostle cites, or alludes to in that place) say as much, and more? *Esay* 45. 9. *Woe to him that striveth with his Maker*, &c. *i. e.* quarrels God about his Providences, as if he meant to controll him.

To clear and confirm my Argument yet further, Doth not the Apostle argue from Reason, upon all occasions, even about the things of God, specially when he had to do with Heathens? *Act.* 14. 15. saith he to those who would have sacrificed to to him, *We preach unto you, to turn from these vanities, unto the living God, which made Heaven and Earth*, &c. As if he should have said, If you will serve a God, serve him that is God indeed, and who is the living and true God, your own reason will shew you: It is he that made Heaven and Earth, &c. You are unexcusable in sacrificing to any other, because no other can be God. And *v.* 17. he goes on to shew, That they, and their fore-Fathers, had light enough from Gods Providential Dispensations, to teach them, that *Jupiter*, *Mercurius*, and such Vanities, or Idols, could not be the true and living God, so as they were inexcusable. And so he argueth, *Act.* 17. That *we ought not to think the God-head like unto Gold or Silver*, &c. seeing it is against all reason, as he proves from

v. 24, to *v.* 29. So likewise *Ro.* 1. he proves the *Gentiles* Idolatry, in making Images and Representations of God, to be against the light of Nature, and natural Reason, which was able to see so much of his eternal Power and Godhead, in the things that are made, as they might easily conclude, that God was not to be represented by any similitude of earthly things, because they cannot be like him, *Act.* 17. 29.

I shall yet in other instances labour to evidence, That there is nothing in true Religion but what is reasonable.

For Moral Duties towards men, our Saviour layeth down an undoubted Principle of Reason, *Mat.* 7. 12. and addeth, *That this is the Law and the Prophets, i. e.* This is the summ and substance of all they have taught, concerning the duty of man to man, the most equal Law, to do as we would be done unto. All the Commandments against Murder, Adultery, Theft, &c. are Principles of common Reason, and the Law of Nature. For Children to obey their Parents, is reasonable, and so the Apostle presseth it, *Eph.* 6. 1. because it is *just*, or *right*. How can Children be thankful, but in being dutiful to their Parents? And for Servants to obey their Masters, it is equal, for they maintain and find them necessaries for their lives. And to obey Principalities and Powers, is but reason, because by them the people are kept in peace, and there would be otherwise no safety or society among men. Whatever some may fancy or feign, True Religion, in the highest and strictest practice of it, is no teacher of mis-rule, but teacheth obedience

dience for conſcience ſake, and ſheweth the right way of yielding it according to Gods Commandment. And 'tis not reaſonable to think, it teacheth obedience in ſome only, and not in all Relations. Yea, it is impoſſible to ſerve God, as we ought, and not to ſerve one another in love.

Nay, the moſt Spiritual Duties of denying our ſelves, and crucifying our luſts, are moſt reaſonable. To part with our lives, and all we have, for Chriſts ſake, is moſt equal, ſeeing he dyed for us. And if I were to diſpute for the Chriſtian Religion, againſt an Infidel, I would dare him to ſhew any one thing in Scripture, that is contrary to ſound Reaſon; or any Article of the Chriſtian Faith, that is not rational, as I have ſhewed before in ſome of them.

And now I lay down theſe three Concluſions, which I avouch rational, and by Reaſon demonſtrable, *viz.*

1. That there is more Reaſon in any Religion, than in no Religion at all.

2. That there is more Reaſon in the true Chriſtian Religion, than there is in any other.

3. That there is more Reaſon in the life and practice of true Religion, and the power of Godlineſs, than in the empty form, and out-ſide profeſſion of it.

Theſe I ſhould further dilate upon, but that all of them are moſt excellently, and undeniably, of late, diſcourſed at large by others. Yet I ſhall not content my ſelf with the bare naming of them.

1st. For the First, I say, That the wayes wherein Atheists have gone about to undermine Scripture-Authority, and so overthrow all Religion, are contrary to sound Reason. For is it not more rational in us, to believe, That one Eternal, Infinite Beeing, made this whole frame of Heaven and Earth, than to fancy an empty, infinite Space, and an infinite number of Atomes courling up and down in it, and by a fortuitous concourse (as it were, by hap-hazard, no sober man can imagine how) to fall into order, and so produce this frame of the World, as now we see it? I shall not dispute in the case, but only appeal to the judgement of any man that's sober and in his senses, which of those two is most credible to the apprehension of Reason. And is not our Faith of one eternal God, as rational, as others conceit of an eternal Pre-existent matter? Not to say, How precarious the Principles of others, that are against us, are, I add, How absurd and unreasonable they are to the apprehension of any sober intelligent man; and farr more incredible and improbable, than what we believe of the Worlds Creation, according to the written Word. Let those who count so light of Scripture-Doctrine, and set so highly by some fiery Speculations and Notions (whether of old or of late cryed up) shew us somewhat more rational, than what is Scriptural. And whether the Phylosophy of *Moses, &c.* be not as agreeable to any sober mans reason, as any opposition of Science, which by some is so much admired. It is not my design, to engage with such Notionists, who had best deal first with others, that

have

have ſaid enough. I think it enough to declare, that they have done little to ſatisfie the ſober reaſon of intelligent men. For (I ſay again) Let all be weighed, not in the ballance of the Sanctuary (which they ſufficiently ſlight) but by the ſtandard of true Reaſon, and if they be not found too light, I grant, they have ſaid ſomewhat to their purpoſe. There is a World fram'd and conſtituted, as we ſee; and a diſpute there hath been, and (I think) ſtill is with ſome, How it came to be ſo fram'd and conſtituted? Now I only plead, That the account, which *Moſes* hath given of the Worlds beginning, is much more credible to meer Reaſon, than any other. And thereupon ask, Why ſhould it ſeem incredible, that one who had his beeing from none, but of himſelf, ſhould make all things out of nothing? They, whoſe intereſt it would be, to have no God, are willing to perſwade themſelves, and others too, that there is none. And theſe ſay, That ſome men have, for their own turns, made others believe, there is a God, and ſo the World is troubled about ſomething, which is indeed nothing. We who believe the beeing of one God, appeal not to Scripture (of which theſe men count nothing) but ask them, How this frame, and all its furniture, came to be firſt ſet up? That this World made it ſelf, is an abſurdity, beyond all reaſon, and common ſenſe. Hence ſome have deviſed wayes of faſhioning the World, ſuch as I hinted ſome before, that they may ſtand in no fear of any God or Devil, nor live in expectation of any Hell or Heaven hereafter. But herein they goe againſt all Reaſon, which is the

only Judge, to whose sentence they are content to stand. That the true notion of a Deity is most consonant to Reason, and the light of Nature, is excellently proved by the Learned *Stillingfleet*. And they that deny, there is a God, do assert other things (as he saith) on farr less evidence of reason; and must by their own Principles, deny some things, which are apparently true. And he instances in these, *viz.* That the World was as it is, from all Eternity, or else it was first made by a fortuitous concourse of Atomes, both which Hypotheses being urged with the same, or greater difficulties, are more weakly proved, than the existence of a Deity. And whoever shall be pleas'd to enquire, will find it so, Therefore we contend for Religion against Atheists, upon grounds of Reason. And I say again, That none of them all have produced any thing so rational, as that which is Scriptural.

Orig. Sac. lib. 3. c. 1.

2*dly*. And for the truth and reason of the Christian Religion, the same learned Author hath said enough in the learned discourse aforesaid. All that I shall say, is this, That if any man please to examine all the several religious perswasions, that are, or have been in the World, beside that which Scripture hath reveal'd and warranted, and weigh them in the ballance of sound Reason, he need not be much puzzled about the choice of his Religion: For it will soon appear, even to Reason, That all Religions, beside the truly Christian, are unreasonable.

If any ſtrange at this, becauſe many in all ages, who had good natural Reaſon, have rejected the Chriſtian Religion. I anſwer,

1. That they had Reaſon, but made not a due and right improvement of it, and therefore ſhewed themſelves unreaſonable, as the Apoſtle proves it againſt them, *Ro.* 1. 19, 20, *&c.* And that God did therefore give them up to vile affections, as a puniſhment of their unreaſonable Idolatries.

2. We having Scripture-light, which they had not, have our Reaſon more rectified and enlightned, than they had, or could have. And without the light of Divine Revelation, we, in all probability, might have been as vain in our imaginations, as they. But then, I ſay, both we and they had been unreaſonable. And God himſelf uſeth no other Argument againſt the *Gentiles* Idolatries, than the abſurdity and unreaſonableneſs of them, *Eſay* 44. *They that make a graven Image,* &c. *they are their own witneſſes. They ſee not, nor know, that they may be aſhamed.* And after a large account of their doings about their Images and Idols, *v.* 18, 19. he ſaith, *They have not known, nor underſtood.* And again, *None conſidereth in his heart, nor is there knowledge or underſtanding,* &c. As if he ſhould ſay, *Theſe Makers of Idols, that know whereof they are made, and how handled in the making, are the beſt witneſſes, that can be brought againſt them: For if they were not ſadly beſotted, and void of common ſenſe, they would never imagine, the ſtock of a Tree could be made a God.* The main thing to be obſerv'd for my purpoſe, is this,

Eſay 44. 10. Who hath formed a God, *&c?* i.e. Who but a mad man, *&c. Garâk. Annotat. in Loc.*

That they had light enough by their own reason, to discover the vanity of making Idols. For this they are charged with, That they did not debate the matter with themselves, nor reason the case as they might; which if they had done, they could never have been so brutish and senseless, as they shewed themselves to be, in saying to the work of their own hands, *Ye are our Gods.*

And now, Let none desire me to instance in any other, having spoken of Idolaters, because all the World of Mankind, that worship not the true and only God, in the alone Mediator, and no other, are Idolaters. This is plain and clear, and needs no proof; except any will say, The *Turks* are no Idolaters, because they like no Images. But however, they are affected to Images; they must be ranked amongst Idolaters, that honour a Varlet (such as *Mahomet* was) more than the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not the Son, *and therefore have not the Father*, 1 *Joan.* 2. 23. And then, what can they be other, than Idolaters? The same is to be thought of the *Jews*, who worship the true God, but not in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To instance in the particular absurdities of all other Religions, would be endless, and (for ought I know) to no great purpose. It may suffice to hint in general, what any man may improve, (when ever he pleases, in his own thoughts) by running over in his mind, the wayes and doings of all that serve not one God only in the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though we had our Religion by Revelation, and that be enough to confirm our Faith; yet we have this to boot,

for

for our further confirmation in it, That it hath more of Reaſon in it, than any other.

Hence we inferr, That an Atheiſt is the verieſt fool of all, that for the pleaſures of this World, which he may not enjoy one hour, cannot (by his own confeſſion) enjoy one hundred of years, dares run the hazard of loſing himſelf for ever. As long as it is diſputable with him, Whether there be a God, or no, his wiſeſt and ſafeſt way were, to chuſe the ſtrongeſt ſide: For if it prove at laſt, that there is no God, he gains a very little, as much as comes to nothing, no more than a beaſt, that hath as much as he, and more too. But if there be a God (ſuch as we believe) in what a caſe will he be, at the great day of account? And to think, there is a God, that cares not what becomes of the World, and will never judge the World, is all one, as to ſay, there is no God. Now a man had need of infallible and undeniable Principles, to prove, there is no God, who dares to live in this World, as if there were none; becauſe the adventure is of infinite concernment and conſequence.

And for the choice of a mans Religion, I ſay again, He need do no more than uſe his Reaſon, That will give him light enough to chuſe the beſt. I do not ſay, nor mean, That *Reaſon* alone could ever have diſcover'd the only way of Salvation, or the right way of worſhipping God, ſo as to pleaſe him in it. But when God hath in his Word diſcover'd to us his good will, in all that concerns his glory, and our everlaſting good, we dare appeal to *Reaſon*, for the truth and goodneſs of our *Religion*; and challenge all the

World,

World, to ſhew us any other, that is half so rational.

Vindicia Pietatis, by *R. A.*

3*dly*. I ſhould be much more large in proving my third Poſition, about the power and practice of true *R*eligion, if another hand had not of late ſo happily prevented me; yet ſomewhat I have to ſay of this alſo.

Vix compos mentis.

'Tis no ſtrange, or new thing, to ſee all godlineſs, and circumſpect walking, cryed down, under an odious imputation of folly and fancy. 'Twas ſaid of Chriſt, *He is beſide himſelf, Marc.* 3. 21. or one tranſported with a Fanatique Extaſie. And of the bleſſed Apoſtle, *That too much learning had made him madd, Act.* 26. 24. His plain manner and method of preaching Chriſt crucified, was by the worldly-wiſe counted and call'd, *the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, though it were indeed, *the wiſdome and power of God to Salvation*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. Therefore we have the leſs need to be troubled at the language of many in our times, ſeeing they ſpeak but what they have learn'd from their Fore-fathers. For certain, we pretend to no Enthuſiaſms, beyond all ſenſe and reaſon; but appeal to Chriſt, and his written Word, to be tryed by them in all things; for which we are counted Fanatiques.

For the aſperſion of Folly, upon all that deſire to remember God in his wayes, and to walk humbly with him, we may ſafely appeal to the ſame Judges, now before ſpoken of, becauſe the wiſdome of God in Scripture give the name of [FOOL] to none but to ſuch as are ungodly; Witneſs *Davids* Pſalmes, and *Solomons* Proverbs,

verbs, &c. But I ſhall argue a little further thus: If the Principles of our Religion be ſuch, as we are bound to contend for it againſt all Adverſaries, then the practice which agrees beſt with, and comes neareſt to thoſe Principles, deſerves not the imputation of Folly, nor can be ſo accounted of by any, but unreaſonable men. Hence I am bold to ask, Who are the verieſt fools? They that know the Laws of Chriſt, and labour to walk accordingly: Or they that pretend to know them, but in all their works deny them? The Principles of true Chriſtian Religion are theſe, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *That we deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly*, &c. *That for every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account*, Mat. 12. 36. *That God ſhall bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs*, and bring them to judgement, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *Eccleſ.* 12. 14. Now compare mens practices with theſe Principles, and it may be eaſily ſeen, who are the verieſt fools. Many there are, that glory much in their being Proteſtants; and will ſometimes pity Papiſts, for being miſ-led, as to their religious perſwaſions. But I am bold to think, That ſome Proteſtants have as much need to pity themſelves, for their ungodly practices. For if any under Heaven, be in the way to Hell, ſome of theſe Proteſtants are. If you deſire to know, which of them? I anſwer, All thoſe, who are common ordinary Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicators, and Adulterers, with all of the ſame ſtamp; and that (to fill up the meaſure of their ſins the faſter) do ſhew the greateſt hatred and ſcorn, that can be, of all that profeſs

and

and practice godlineſs. This I have againſt the Proteſtants (or rather for them, if they will make a right uſe of it) That a Papiſt, leading an honeſt, temperate, and ſober life, can give a more rational account of his *Religion*, than any of them, or any others like them. But I ſay further, Doth not *Reaſon* teach every man, to be true to his own Principles; and that we ſhould not profeſs one thing, and practice another quite contrary? Nay, do not lewd and vicious perſons cry out againſt others, that they are not, what they ſeem to be? Theſe (ſay they) are your great Profeſſors, and they can do ſo and ſo. Is this according to their profeſſion? And I ſay, If great Profeſſors, be not alſo preciſe and ſtrict practiſers, they are to be blamed, yea, and without *Repentance*, ſhall be damn'd.

But I ſay withall, That whoever proclaims himſelf a Proteſtant, is a great Profeſſor in ſo doing. For the true Proteſtant *Religion* teaches and obliges to all poſſible circumſpection, and holy converſation, and godlineſs. The Goſpel is call'd, *The Doctrine that is according to Godlineſs*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. As for any, that are accounted more than ordinary Profeſſors, I heartily wiſh, that none of them might deſerve the charge, that's commonly made againſt them; and to them I ſay, If they be indeed faulty, they ſhall dearly rue it: I mean, they muſt reform their lives, or their profeſſion will ſtand them in no ſtead one day, when all ſhall be judged according to their works. And for many of them, I am confident, and well aſſured, That ſuch a charge is no better than a calumny, and reproaching

ing of Christ in his members. For there are many of them (I hope) *Nathaniels*, and true *Israelites*, in whom there is no guile.

However it be, this agreed upon, on all hands, That 'tis unreasonable, to profess one thing, and practice another. And hence I say, That all Protestants, so call'd, who are vicious in their lives, do therein shew themselves unreasonable, as well as ungodly men. For many of them, I believe, (and not without reason) that they know not well themselves, what they profess. Sure many of them (the more pity) are profoundly ignorant of the very first Principles of the Protestant-Religion? and can give no rational or tolerable account, why they are *Protestants*, and not *Papists*, or *Pagans*. But whatever they know of their *Religion*, I am sure, many of them little consider of any conversation suitable to it. And therefore I shall mind them of what they do profess, and it is this, That they profess the strictest and precisest way of serving God, and walking with God, that ever was made known to the Children of Men. They profess to believe the Gospel of Christ, and that Gods written Word is the only *Rule* of Faith and Manners. Now the Gospel, and the Word of Grace, do certainly prescribe the most exact and accurate way of Life, that can be. And I need not be long in proving this to any professed *Protestants*. But if any make question of it, let them enquire, what they engaged for, and to, when they were baptized. For then they must acknowledge themselves *Professors* of a very strict *Religion*, unless they will renounce their Baptism.

The

The Fanatiques are not the only great Professors; but every one, that owns himself for a Protestant, must either disown his Baptism, and blaspheme Christ, and the Gospel openly; or else he must look on himself as a great Professor of Godliness. For as Christ commanded, so Baptism obligeth to the most severe and precisest way of Godliness. And if he live in the constant practice and allowance of all uncleanness, he is as unreasonable, as well as a wicked man. The Apostle joyns both those together, 2 *Thes.* 3. 2. And if those wicked ones there meant (perhaps professed Infidels) were unreasonable, much more they that profess the Faith, and are in their conversation worse than Infidels. Those indeed contradicted their own Principles: But professed *Christians* much more, and are therefore most unreasonable and wicked men. For Grace and Nature, Law and Gospel, cry out against them, and will one day come in, as witnesses for their conviction, because they walk'd contrary to them all. Let them count of themselves as they please for a while, Christ, when he comes to judge, will number them with those, *Who cry, Lord, Lord, and do not the will of his Father which is in Heaven; and therefore they must depart, and be gone, because they are the workers of iniquity.* And what do these mean by their going to Church, and joyning in publick Prayer, and hearing of Sermons, and receiving the Sacraments? Sure in these they profess, and pretend to somewhat. They will not (I hope) say, They profess Adultery, and Swearing, and Drunkenness, *&c.* And yet all the World knows, many

Mat. 7. 21, 22, 23.

many of them live in the constant practice of such, or the like abominable vices.

1. These I wish first to consider what they do, when they mock and scoff at others, for their preciseness. For if they dealt, as becomes rational men, they would, as often as they see any more strict and precise, presently say, These men do honestly, and rationally too, for they practice, as they profess; whereas we profess as much as they, but do nothing alike.

2. I wish them also to consider, That when they cry out against others, as Hypocrites and Dissemblers, in so doing, they condemn themselves. For they profess the *Religion* that Christ taught; and they will not say (I hope) that Christ taught men to be Swearers, and Drunkards, *&c.* Now they must say thus, and so be most horrid Blasphemers; or confess themselves to be Dissemblers, for practising quite contray to what they profess. And that they do so, is beyond all contradiction; and when they can prove others to be the same, we will say as much of them. But till then, we have reason to look on these, as unreasonably wicked, so unreasonably uncharitable towards others, to say no worse of them.

I might here enlarge my self, by shewing the unreasonableness of most Sins, that are of ordinary and daily practice, with many call'd *Protestant*. But somewhat tending this way, was hinted before, in shewing the *Reason* that is in all the Commandments. Yet I shall add, That whereas they have cryed out against their Ministers, for being so harsh and severe, they forget

what

what their own Consciences have told them oftner, and more sharply, than ever any Minister did, or could. But of this I may say more elsewhere. For present, I urge them with the unreasonableness of their constant daily practices, and ask them, Is not prophane Swearing an unreasonable sin, when there is not (as in some other fleshly wickedness) any the least seeming sensual profit or pleasure? A man may be a very Epicure (as one saith) and yet hate Swearing. What doth a Drunkard make himself to be, more than a two legg'd Beast? Nay, is there any Beast almost, that will drink to drunkenness, except it be a Swine? I need not instance in more particulars. But to shut up this, All or most of the Ten Commandments have been, and still are, justly accounted to be of moral and natural equity. And the Fourth, though yielded to be but Positive-moral, hath as much Reason in it, That since God hath allowed us six dayes, we may well allow him the seventh. And they that make no conscience of this, and many other Commandments, as appears by their practices, are unreasonable men, which was the thing to be proved.

Arg. 3. ANother Reason, to prove ungodly men guilty of their own destruction, and so altogether inexcusable before the Lord, may be drawn from the inward secret workings of their own Consciences. For when they pretend, That they want Light, to see the good

good, and the right way, their Conſciences will riſe up, and be as ſo many ſwift witneſſes againſt them. How many times have they been rounded in the ear, and told by a voice within them, that their way was not good before the Lord? How often hath Conſcience ſtood, as the Angel did in *Balaams* way, with a drawn ſword in his hand, to turn them back again? What dumps, and fits of melancholly (as ſome call them) have they had, when thoſe everlaſting burnings have flaſh'd in their faces, to fright them out of their ungodly wayes? And will they yet ſay, They had not Light enough, to ſee the good, and the right way; when they notwithſtanding have poſted on ſtill, and preſs'd forward againſt all oppoſition and contradiction of Conſciences? For certain, many wicked ones have had much of their Hell upon Earth; ſo much, as might have ſerv'd (if they had been wiſe enough) to mind them of Heavens way. It may be, that ſome of them have their Heaven here, though a very ſhort, uncertain, and inconſiderable felicity. But there are few of them, that meet not with rubbs enough, to ſtop them in their career Hell-ward, if they would but heed them. They are not ſo merry, as the World takes them to be; But even in the midſt of laughter, the heart is ſorrowful, to think what will be the end of their mad mirth.

I need not ſay more to theſe, than only adviſe them to abide at home, and hear what their Conſciences tell them. But this perhaps is labour in vain, when they are reſolv'd beforehand, to give Conſcience as good as it brings.

However, I cannot forbear to stick this, as an Arrow in their sides, and let them pluck it out again, if they can: That they can with no face, or colour of truth, say, They have not Light to see the good, and the right way. For God hath put a Light into their hands, and they have put it out on purpose, that they may goe on in darkness. And this God himself charges them with, *Psa.* 14. 4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge*, &c. The Interrogative hath in it a more vehement deniall. It is not of ignorance, or infirmity, they do thus wickedly, but wittingly, and willingly, against all conviction of Conscience. And therefore there will be need of no other witnesses against these men one day, than what they themselves shall bring forth, and God will, in his judging of them, appeal to their own Consciences, that will then be ready to justifie him before all the World, that he gave them a Light to see plainly the perverseness of their own way, but they cast it away, or put it out, and would not walk by it. I need say no more, but only desire men to consider, how they will answer their own Consciences, in the great day of account, when they have resisted so long, and so often gone against, what they have known by the Light that is within them. If they can deal with Conscience hereafter, as they do at present, they may do themselves a pleasure: But I much doubt it.

Annon sibi sunt Conscii?

Arg. 4. I Shall add another Reaſon, to prove, That men have had Light enough ſhining round about them, and would not endure it. And this is their impatiency, and peeviſhneſs of Spirit, when they have been again and again admoniſhed of their faults, by ſuch as have known them, and have had opportunities of doing them ſuch a good Office.

And here I may, upon this occaſion, take up a complaint, and ſay, Who, or where is he, that will bear a ſeaſonable reproof, when it is given him? Some ſuch (I hope) there are; but truly it is not eaſie to light on them. A man had need run to and fro to ſeek them; and if any ſhould ask me, Where ſuch dwell? I cannot eaſily give an anſwer, ſuch as I would.

'Tis ſaid of *Cranmer*, *That to do him a ſhrewd turn, was the way to make him a Friend for ever.* If it were ſo indeed, I cannot enough admire the moſt excellent frame of his Spirit, that could turn Poyſon into Medicine; and take occaſion to love, even from that which only tends to hatred and ſtrife. Surely the contrary is to be ſeen in too many. Do them the beſt office of love, that can be done, you make them your Enemies for ever, they will never care for you more.

And this is an infallible Demonſtration, of what I am now diſcourſing. How can men ſay, they want Light, when they run from it, and will not ſuffer it to come near them. *The Law is a light, and the reproofs of inſtruction are the way of life*, Pro. 6. 23. So ſaith the Wiſeman, by the wiſdome of God in him. And I may ſay

of Christian brotherly admonition, that it is a a most singular help to preserve and improve the life and practice of godliness. It is, as it were, the snuffing of the lights, to make them burn more clearly. I need not shew how much the Scripture commends it: He that turns over the Bible, cannot be ignorant of it.

It is, in one word, a Duty, that lies on all men; but on professed Christians more especially; to give it wisely, as there is occasion; and take it kindly, when it is given.

Now for men to storm and rage, upon all occasions, against all reproof, and shew themselves such, as others dare not come near them, is a sufficient Argument of Conviction, and cannot be answer'd. For with what face can a man plead, that he is well dispos'd, and willing to do what's right, when, be he never so much out of his way, be scorns to be told of it? Yet many such there are, who have shut up their Consciences under hatches; and for others, they dare not tell them of their faults, lest they be made to feel their fingers. And I wish this were the fault of Ruffians and Roysters only: But many more sober to look upon, and perhaps inoffensive otherwise, as to other men, will rage like madd, if you come near them, with the least touch of a reproof, though never so gentle and seasonable. Yea, a man had need beware of them, *Lest they make him an Offendor for a word, and lay a snare for him in the gate.* Nor I, nor others need to marvell at the great miscarriages of so many, if we but duly consider, what I am now speaking of. There must needs be an a-

Esay 29. 21.

bounding

bounding of all ungodlineſs, when it overflows all the banks, and no man dares put a ſtop to it, by ſaying to another, Why do you thus? And this, to ſay no more, is enough to ſhew, That men might, if they would, know more of God, and his will, but that they deſpiſe admonition, and will not abide reproof. They cannot pretend want of Light, who put it away, whenſoever it is offer'd to them; and would, if they could, put it quite out, that they may goe on in darkneſs.

Arg. 5. THere is yet more Light to ſhew men their way, if they would but heed it, and not wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt it. Every ſincere and ſound Believer is a Light, ſhining in the midſt of a crooked Nation. And herein ungodly men condemn themſelves, that they cannot abide the light of other mens profeſſion and practice, holding forth the word of life. They are ever quarrelling thoſe, that are more eminent in profeſſion, for their miſcarriages in practice, whether truly or falſely charg'd upon them. For what is this more, or better, than the enmity that is in their hearts againſt God, and his wayes? And let it not offend any, that I ſay ſo, till they have heard what I have yet to ſay. Philip. 2. 15.

That many eminent Profeſſors have faulted and fallen, and that moſt foully, cannot be denied, becauſe the Scriptures have furniſh'd us with ſo many ſad Inſtances in this kind. And

that the moſt of Gods faithful Servants have been fam'd, or defam'd rather, as guilty of the ſame, or the like, is clear from Scripture, and from experience in all ages. But whether the faults of Profeſſors be reall, or only feigned, ſtill (I ſay again) the Scandall that is taken by ſo many, is an Argument of the old hatred; and ſhews an inbred deſire, to have the wayes of God ſlurr'd, that they may have an excuſe for ſlighting them. And if it be ſo (as I hope to make it appear) we have another Evidence, that men have Light enough, but have no mind to walk by it. For why ſhould any man cry out (as many do) againſt Profeſſors, and profeſſion of Religion, if there were not ſomewhat more, than what they are willing to have known by themſelves? But I ſhall argue it a little further thus.

First, I'le ſuppoſe the Scandall to be indeed reall: What then? Is that a ground ſufficient to ſay, I will never goe in the way, that ſuch pretended to? A man indeed may, and ought to ſay, I will never do, as ſuch have done, wherein they have done amiſs. And this both Religion and Reaſon will teach us. But therefore to ſlight, and ſet at naught all Profeſſion, and the very face and ſhew of Religion (to ſay no more) is moſt unreaſonable, and a ſufficient evidence of that enmity, which is by Nature in the hearts of all men againſt God, and his wayes. For what is Gods way the worſe, becauſe ſuch and ſuch have turn'd aſide from it? Nay, is it better than blaſphemy, to cry out with open mouth, againſt that which is of God, becauſe of

that which is vile and base in men? *David* committed Adultery, and Murder too, and therein occasion'd the enemies of God to blaspheme, which was the great aggravation of his sin and punishment. But observe, It was blasphemy in the enemies of God; and they were Gods enemies, that took occasion to blaspheme. For those enemies might have known, and should have taken notice, that *David's* God had forbidden those horrid sins, by his righteous Laws, written in the hearts of all men; and therefore had no cause to speak or think the worse of him, for his Servants offences. Was Christ the worse, or the less to be esteem'd, because *Peter* denied and forswore him? What reason then is there, in making the waves of God to suffer for the faults of those that pretend to them? *The wayes of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressours shall fall therein*, *Hos.* 14. 9. The best Master may have a base Servant, and the best Prince may have a Traytor amongst his Subjects; must the good Prince or Master bear the fault of the bad Subject or Servant? Or is subjection and service to be denied by others, because some Servants and Subjects are not so good as they should be? And in such cases, every man will say, There is no cause. And what reason, I pray, is there in this case, more than in those? *These be the people of Jehovah*, said the enemies of both, *Ezech.* 36. 20. These be your great Professors, say many: But who? None but enemies to God and godliness. Oh! say they, See what such an one hath done. We will grant it, and 'tis but too true,

He hath done, what he ought not to have done. But why is this cast, as dirt, in the face of all Professors, and profession of Religion? The God whom they serve, alloweth them not in their so doing: He hath forbidden them to do so, and commanded them the quite contrary. And all the wayes of his Commandments are holy, just, and good. To profess the true Religion is good, and according to the mind of God, though it be not all that's good: For to a good profession, must be added a good conversation, and the Power of Godlineſs must goe along with the Form of it. If a man profeſs, and practice not accordingly, thou hast no cause to slight his profession; but rather to do what he did not, *viz.* Adorn thy profession with a suitable conversation.

In this I plead not for empty, outside Professors, that dishonour, as much as may be, the profession of Religion. I shall rather advise them to one of these two, *viz.* To let their conversation hold pace with their profession, that the Name of God be not blaſphemed; or else to lay aside their profession. For such loose Professors of Religion exceedingly wrong themselves, and others, and God most of all, as might be easily shewn in many Particulars. But I shall only say what is enough, That they do, as if they design'd to make all the World scorn and hate God, and his wayes. Men should not indeed slight Gods wayes, for the looseneſs of those that pretend to walk in them, as was said before. But too many are so minded, as they will blaſpheme; and these Professors give them occasion of so doing.

And

And juſt ſo in a manner do all they, who from their *Pulpits* will declame againſt the Vices of others, when all their Auditors know them to live in ſome or other of thoſe ſame Vices, and repent not. Such preaching of ſuch *Preachers*, is a fair Argument, to encourage the looſer ſort in ſlighting all preaching, and all profeſſion of Religion. For what will they ſay, other than this? *If there be ſuch danger in ſuch wayes, as we are told; and ſo much neceſſity of taking up a more preciſe courſe, why doth not our Miniſter, and others like him, practice their own Doctrine? Whatever they ſay, when they are in the Church, we ſee well enough, what they do elſewhere, and at other times. Why may not we run the adventure, as well as they.* And indeed, it is the ready way to perſwade people, That all the matters of God and Religion, are of no great concernment, when they ſee, they are diſcours'd of ſometimes for faſhion, and in a form, by ſuch as believe not what themſelves ſay. They that preach thus, as it were, in jeſt, are not likely to bring others to practice in good earneſt. And to ſpeak all in a few words, Such *Preachers* and *Profeſſors* (as before) if they would ſet their wits on work, to make all the World Atheiſt (as once it was Arian) cannot deviſe a more compendious way and method for the purpoſe.

But though ſuch *Preachers* and *Profeſſors* there be, yet whoever ſhall therefore ſtand off, or turn aſide from the wayes of Gods Commandments, will in the day of account be inexcuſably guilty before the Lord, of neglecting his duty. Is there ſo much as common ſenſe, in

ſaying,

saying, Why should I do what's good and right when others do not? Even Reason may teach us, That since God is so much dishonour'd by the looseness of others, we should labour the more, by an unblameable conversation, to vindicate the honour of Gods Name, in despite of the Devil, and all his devices. For this ungodly humour in many, to cry down all Religion, and profession of it, upon the account of some Professors miscarriages, argues nothing more, than enmity against all godliness; which yet they would fain hide and excuse, by the faults of others, that pretend to more than themselves. He that's glad of any occasion, to pick (as we say) a quarrel with another, for certain hates him, and hath not the least respect for him. And to clear it yet farther:

Secondly, Such Wretches, when they can find no occasion, will be forward enough to feign and frame one. Hence have sprung all those reproachful nick-names, cast upon Professors, and the profession of Religion. Hence are false reports rais'd on purpose, to cause an Odium amongst all that hear of them. And if there were no more, I should say less. But God himself is reproached, and made to suffer. For all these lyes and falsities are intended, to make Religion and Godliness to be an abhorring (if it were possible) to all flesh. This, this is the design, that lies in the bottom, to render the wayes of God (in themselves most amiable) as odious as may be, so as men may have the greatest prejudice that's possible against them.

For

For when they have ſo diſguis'd them, they, and others have a fairer pretence to ſhun and ſcorn them. Thus, as little Children, they make the Bug-bears, wherewith they affright themſelves, and their fellows. And do as the Heathens of old, who firſt cloath'd poor Chriſtians in the ſpoyles of Beaſts, and then expos'd them to be worried, and torn in pieces by Lyons, and other ravenous Creaures.

There is certainly a beauty in Holineſs, and *all her wayes are wayes of pleaſantneſs*, *Pro.* 3. 17. But to a man in his natural condition, they are not pleaſing, but rather hateful and loathſome. And hence he doth by them, as men do by thoſe whom they hate, and cannot abide, render them in all companies, as odious as may be, that others may hate them, as well as themſelves do. When *John Hus* was brought forth to be burnt, his enemies put on his head a triple Crown of paper, painted over with Devils; and the Biſhops ſaid, when it was ſet on his head, *Now we commit thy Soul unto the Devil.* Such in a manner is the rage and madneſs of all ungodly men. They would damn, if they could, all whom they hate and perſecute for Chriſts ſake; and therefore raiſe the vileſt reports of them they can, to make the World believe, they are gone to Hell, as ſoon as they are gone hence. And why is all this adoe? Only to obſcure and ſtifle all the glorious beauty of holineſs, that ſhines in Gods Servants, ſo as it may not be ſeen. And this out of hatred againſt God, who ſets up his people, as ſo many Lights in the World, to ſhew men the way wherein they ſhould goe. But the World,

that

that lieth in wickedneſs, hates the good, and the right way; and therefore doth what it can, to put out thoſe Lights; and therein prove, that they love darkneſs. But however, all that pretend to the wayes of God, do not walk in them; yet (bleſſed be God) there have alwayes been ſuch, as will not be turn'd out of them, for all that can be ſaid or done againſt them. And theſe will be witneſſes one day, againſt all that have rejected them. And in this ſenſe (if in no other) *the Saints ſhall judge the World*, 1 Cor. 6. 2. Yea, in this ſenſe, they do now judge and condemn the World. Their piety, faith, holineſs, and fear of God, are a Light, and leave wicked men without excuſe: And as *Noah by his faith prepared an Ark, by which he condemn'd the World*, Heb. 11. 7. ſo do they. Some indeed, too many pretenders, have cauſed many to ſtumble and fall: But through the grace of God, all are not ſuch. As there is indeed, and in truth, ſuch a thing as true Holineſs; ſo there are *Iſraelites* indeed, *ſhining as lights, and holding forth the Word of life*, Philip. 2. 15, 16. And theſe Lights many times are ſo bright, as their enemies are forc'd to bear witneſs unto them, as *Saul* did to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Thou art more righteous than I.* They cannot, after all their prying, find ſo much as a flaw in them, ſo as to have a juſt complaint againſt them. And this will be one day a convincing Argument againſt ungodly ones, That they had ſeen ſo many examples of thoſe, that loathed their wayes of exceſs, and ryot, and uncleanneſs, and yet refuſed to follow them; but rather ſet them at

nought,

tought, upon this account, That they would *not run into the same excess with themselves*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. Now the reall Apologies of Christians examples, being so many witnesses for God, and his wayes, how can men say, They want Light, to shew them, what they have to do? How must they not one day be without all excuse, even upon this account?

Arg. 6. ANother Argument for proving my general Proposition, is this, That the failings of all men are mostly, if not altogether, in practice; so as they know, but do not. This shews, that 'tis not for want of light, that they walk on in darkness. The first and chiefest part of mans sinful corruption lieth in his will and affections. *The Woman indeed was deceiv'd*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 14. But it was by deceitful Lust, *Gen.* 3. 6. *When she saw, that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of the fruit of it*, &c. It was the inordinacy of her appetite, that transported her to taste, what God had forbidden her, so much as to touch. I grant, she was deceiv'd, and that the Serpent deluded her, to believe a lye. And it is (I conceive) a truth, That in every evil, there is an errour. Hence

Nullum unquam peccatum errore vacat. Nam ut maximè sciens, ac volens quis peccet, excæcatum tamen suâ cupiditate esse oportet, ne rectè judicet: imò ut se ac Deum obliviscatur. Nunquam enim in suum exitium ruerunt homines, nisi Satanæ fallaciis implicit, a recto judicio aberrarent. Calv. in Ep. ad Hebr. c. 9. v. 7.

We

we read, *Heb.* 3. 13. of *the deceitfulness of sin*, and *Eph.* 4. 22. of *deceitful lusts*. We should not sin, if we were not deceiv'd. Lust is as a mist, that mis-leads us. A man that hath eyes, cannot see his way in a mist, but roves and runs up and down, and cannot hit on the right. A man would never chuse the worse, and leave the better, if he were not in a mistake. The Apostle describes the Gentiles, as *Strangers to the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*, *Eph.* 4. 18. And the first work of grace on any Soul, is, *to turn it from darkness unto light*, *Act.* 26. 18. And *to turn a man from the error of his way*, *Jac.* 5. 20.

But all this (for ought I can see) doth not contradict what I said before, *viz.* That a mans inordinate affections, and his enraged appetite, do raise the mist, that clouds and darkens him, so as to wander after vanities and lyes, and *forsake his own mercies*. And all serves (as I suppose) to our present purpose. Men are commonly worse in their practices, than in their principles, as I said before; and yet I deny not, that they are corrupted in both. For it is not, to me, imaginable, how a man should be corrupted in one, and not in the other. But this we find by experience (which is all I mean) That men commonly have better principles than practices. Hence so many, that are sound in the Faith, as to their perswasions of the truth of Religion, in their lives are most abominable. And what need we any more witnesses, to convince and condemn these men? Their own opinions are enough to confute their practices, and prove

them

hem rebels againſt the light. And can they omplain, they have not light to ſee their way o Heaven? They have enough, and too much, nleſs they could uſe it better.

How uſual is it for notorious Sinners, and moſt abominable vicious perſons, to plead for the Ten Commandments, when I know no body againſt them, but ſuch as they, and their fellows? They know, and can repeat the Ten Commandments, and ſay they are Gods Commandments; And yet a civil man cannot abide within the breath of theſe men, becauſe every other word almoſt is an Oath with them. A man would hardly believe, that men ſhould lead their lives all the week in ſuch exceſs, and all manner of uncleanneſs, and yet on *Sundayes* cry out ſo devoutly (as they ſeem to do) at the reading of every Commandment, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this Law.* Do not theſe men proclaim Gods commands to be their principles, and yet contradict them in all their practices? They dare not, they cannot for their hearts, ſay with their mouths, that Swearing, and Drunkenneſs, and Adultery, *&c.* are not ſins, and tranſgreſſions of Gods Laws; and yet they live in a conſtant practice of all ſuch abominations.

Now what ſhall we think of theſe men? They have a Light ſufficient to ſhew them the errour of their way. They do not indeed ſet it on a candleſtick, but rather under a buſhel. Though it be not quite put out, yet it ſhines not ſo, as they can ſee any thing by it, as they ought. And I can conceive no other reaſon, Why the light in

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these men is so useless, but only that it was never strong enough, to work an absolute thorow conviction, as when *Gods Spirit conviceth of Sin*, &c. *Joan.* 16. 8. The lusts of these men were never subdued to the power of their principles. They could perhaps, some of them, discourse the vanity of the creature, and the emptiness of all worldly things, even to admiration; and yet all the while, love the World, and the things of the World, no men more. Grant that there is in such men sometimes a reluctancy, it cannot but be faint and feeble, and in effect as good as none at all. Nay, what if I say, it serves only to enhance their lusts the more, as weak opposition gives an enemy the greater advantage, to let out more of his rage and strength, than otherwise perhaps he would. Certainly, men made up of a mixture of passion, and some reason, are as much plung'd into all sensual and beastly pleasures, as any; because the stream of their lusts is stronger, than to be stopt by any principles they have. Yea, they are in a more ready way, to put darkness for light, and to call evil, good, than any men alive; so as at last the light that is in them, is no better than the blackness of darkness. It was even so with the *Pharisees*, *Luc.* 16. 14. When our Saviour had most excellently discours'd the right use of all earthly riches, and shew'd, that men cannot serve God and Mammon, *They heard all these things, and derided him.* A practice too common amongst others, when a savory Doctrine about some duty, press'd home upon Conscience, hath found no better entertainment with

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many of the Auditors, than a dry ſcoff, or ſome bitter reproachful language againſt the Preacher. But why did the *Phariſees* deride our Saviour? There was a reaſon, and it is expreſs'd in the ſame place, *They were covetous. The love of money is the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. 6.10. There never was an Heretique, or Apoſtate, or any man reprobate to every good work, that had not this, or ſome other root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, and turning him aſide to be hardned, paſt all hope, in his ungodly way. *Demas hath forſaken me*, 2 *Tim.* 4.10. And if you read on, it is to be ſeen in the next words, Why? *He had imbraced this preſent World.* All ages afford great ſtore of ſuch ſad Inſtances. Many, like *Jonathan* (as one ſaith) follow the chaſe with a greedy purſuit, till they light on the honey. *Demas* had no ſooner left *Paul*, but *he went to Theſſalonica*, where he became an Idol-Prieſt, as ſome report. When ſuch men have been provoked, by miſſing of expected preferments, or have had the lure of promotion flung out to them, the next news you hear of them, is, that they are not where you left them, but are gone ſome-where; and if you deſire to know, look in *Jud. v.*11. and you ſhall find, what way they are gone, and upon what account, and what will be the iſſue of all at laſt, if you pleaſe to obſerve that alſo by the way. They (you muſt know) hoyſe up, and ſtrike ſayl again, as the wind ſerves, and ſometimes tack about, only to ſteer a courſe, that will ſerve for preſent ſecurity, or future further advantages. When Religion is in faſhion, they preſently fall in with a

goodly out-side profeſſion, ſo as few can keep pace with them. But when once the wind, that was on their backs, begins to turn, and blow in their teeth, then (as we ſay) faces about, and who more zealous Perſecutors, than ſuch hot-ſpur Profeſſors?

Now may I not ſay of theſe, Have they not heard and known? Doubtleſs they cannot be ignorant. *Balaam* knew well enough, that he ought not to curſe *Iſrael*; and yet the wretched Wizard attempted it again and again, becauſe he 2 Pet. 2. 15. *loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*; and *Balack's* proffer'd rewards blear'd his eyes, as he ſaw not what he did ſee. So is it with every man, that hath no more grace than he. 'Tis no hard taſk for any man of ordinary underſtanding, to conclude, That the way of Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, Swearing, *&c.* is not for profeſſed Chriſtians, or civil rational men to walk in. Yet many have ſometimes reſolv'd againſt them, with vows and imprecations; and yet the next opportunity of a temptation breaks all their 2 Pet. 2. 22. bonds, and the Doggs are *turned to their vomit again.* The reaſon of all is clearly to be ſeen, and it is this: They have their lucid intervals, as other madd men have; and then they can ſee a little, the baſeneſs of their own wayes. But as ſoon as Luſt is ſtirr'd, there riſes a miſt, and then they are as if they had no eyes; and whatever principles they have, they ſerve them for nothing that good is. The Light in theſe men, is as the uncertain blazings of a Candle, burnt down into the ſocket, that will not ſerve a man to do any work; and after it hath flaſh'd a while, goes

goes out with a snuffe, and a stink. 'Tis not long e're these men lye down in a dead sleep, and there's no hope of awakening them, after their interests and passions have subdued their principles, so as to have no more reflection upon their consciences and practices. These are awhile perhaps Orthodox in their principles, but no thanks to them, for they are honest only, because not tempted to be otherwise; and being alwayes Hypocrites in heart, no marvel, if they come at last to be Heretiques, not only in their practices, but in their opinions also.

However, we must say of these, That *they say, and do not*: Or (which is all one) they know, and do not. They profess what they do not practice; and is not this enough to silence them, when they say, If we had known, we would have done better? For they lye in what they say; and if they had a mind to fight it out with their lusts, they would never complain, they have not Light enough. Mat. 23.3.

No wicked men are so ignorant, as not to know, that they are out of the way: Only the violence of their sinful affections hurry them on against their reason. And will this (think you) excuse them? It may indeed blind them a while, but it will not bear them out, when God shall call to an account.

Arg. 7. AND now I shall a little enforce the former Reason, by adding another Argument, if you please to call it so, *viz.*

That prophane and ungodly wretches, who profeſs the Faith of Chriſt, do condemn themſelves, by allowing the practices of the Saints recorded in Scripture. They ſay, the Apoſtles, and others, were good men, and are now in Heaven. And what can they anſwer, if they be ask'd, Why do you not then trace their footſteps? They dare not ſay, Thoſe Saints in Heaven, (whom they ſo much magnifie) went thither in that way they themſelves walk in. And truly it is much, that ſome men ſhould ſo magnifie the dead Saints, and ſhew themſelves Devils all the while, in vexing thoſe that are alive. A man may truly ſay to thoſe wretches, That the Saints in Heaven, led not ſuch lives on Earth, as they do, and therefore will be witneſſes againſt them. I have heard indeed, that ſome impudent hardned Sinners have been ſo bold, as to ſpeak of the Saints infirmities, recorded in Scripture; as if their own enormities might be paſs'd over, as well. But if they were not unreaſonable, as well as ungodly, they might know, That thoſe good men once fell into great Sins, but did not lye in them, or make a trade of them. If theſe men would repent and turn, as thoſe Saints did, their caſe were quite otherwiſe, than now it is. Thoſe Saints were in their conſtant practice holy and righteous men, no ſuch debauch'd and vicious perſons as theſe. And how comes it to paſs, that they have ſo much reſpect for thoſe holy men, whoſe lives and converſations they never care to follow? Certainly, in honouring thoſe good men, they in a ſort allow of goodneſs and holineſs, and ſo condemn themſelves, in doing

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contrary to what those men did. Saint *Paul*, and Saint *Peter*, and the rest, were men that led their lives in all puritie and holinesse, free, and far from the pollutions, and unclean practices of these men, that so much cry them up. What do they then, in their thus magnifying the Saints of old? Why, they do, as the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 23. 29. who built the Sepulchres of the Prophets, *&c.* and thereby laboured to gain a reputation with the vulgar, for bearing so much respect to the memorie of those men of God. For by this, they seemed to assert their Doctrine, and so would make the world believe, that they were zealous professors, and followers of that way of worshipping of God, which the old prophets had taught long before. But alas! they were strangers, and enemies to all that the Prophets had taught, and practiced. And just such Hypocrites are others, who pretend to honour, and respect very much the old Saints, and Martyrs, and yet are in their affections, and conversations all one, with those that slew them, and shew'd all rage, and madness against them. Nor will it suffice to say, as the *Scribes*, and *Pharises* did, *vers.* 30. *If we had been in the dayes of our Forefathers, We would not have been partakers with them, &c.* For (as one saith well on this place) an *Herod*, and *Herodias* to *John Baptist*, would have been an *Ahab*, and a *Jezabel* to *Elias*. They that declare against their Foresathers cruelties, do not thereby disclaim them; specially, when they are the same to good, and Godly men now, as their Fathers were to those of old. For what do many wicked wretches

hate, and scorn, and persecute now? Is it not the life of holiness, and power of Godliness; such as was in the Saints of old? Nay, they cannot abide to hear the very Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets preach'd to them, in the manner that the Apostles and Prophets preach'd it of old in their times. And do not these ungodly men prove by their dayly practices, that they are such as they who persecuted the Prophets, and Apostles. Well, however they have this as an evidence against them, that they seem'd so much to allow of Holiness and Godliness in the Saints departed, and yet walk'd clean contrary to them. They that will but observe the Acts of the Apostles, and their Epistles, may easily perceive the vast difference and dissimilitude, that is in the lives and doctrines of them, and these that pretend so much reverence to their names. And whatever men may imagine for a while, those old Saints will one day be so many swift witnesses against all that have seemed to reverence their memories, and yet never imitated their examples. For the most they do, is no more than the Pope doth: He is (if you will believe him) *Peter*'s Successor, but for Life and Doctrine how like to *Peter*, any man may see that reads the Scripture. Even as many others, who would be thought of the same Religion with the Primitive Christians and antient Martyrs, but if they would live as holily and unblameably as they did, what they say would be sooner believed by others, than now it can be.

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Arg. 8. MEn ſay, they want light, and means to know, and do better; but they lie in ſo ſaying: for they will not endure ſound doctrine, nor any that preach it. In this I appeal to the practice of ungodly men in all ages, which furniſh us with Inſtances enough, of ſuch Rebels againſt the light. For Scripture-inſtances, they are well known to all that have read the Bible: There is to be ſeen, how the *Jews* mocked the Lords meſſengers, and deſpiſed his Prophets; ſo as *Stephen* makes the challenge, *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers perſecuted?* And what they did to Gods ſervants, the Prophets, the ſame and worſe they did to him that was the Son of God; *They caſt him out of the vineyard, and ſlew him*, *Mat.* 21. 39. And afterwards held on to perſecute the Apoſtles and other diſpenſers of Goſpel-grace, ſeeking, if it had been poſſible, to extinguiſh that light which the Sun of righteouſneſs had brought into the world. And was it not ſo with others afterwards? how long did the *Roman* Heathen Emperours perſecute the Faith of Chriſt, in the preaching and profeſſion of it? In one word, they did what they could, to make the name of Chriſt and Chriſtian to be no more remembred. And for their Succeſſors, (excepting *Conſtantine* the Great, and ſome that ſucceeded him at times,) they drave on the ſame wicked deſign, though in a way ſomewhat differing: *Julian* (who came not long after *Conſtantine*) is infamous among all to this day, for his Apoſtaſie

2 Chron. 36. 16. Acts 7. 52.

and politick designs to root out all Christianity. And what hath been since done by the power of the Beast, is well known to all that felt his clutches by sad experience, and to all others by certain report. The Gospel is still, through Gods mercie, preach'd and professed, yea more openly and avowedly in this and the last Age, than in many Ages before. But no thanks to many ungodly men, who have let the Light shine, because they could not put it out. Who hath not read, or heard what hazards the first Reformers ran, and what despightfull opposition they met withall? and to this day, how impatient are many of some kinde of Preachers and Preaching? O the frequent quarrels that have been against the most able and painfull Ministers, for nothing but their labours and endeavours to turn the people committed to their charge, from their ungodly wayes! The same Spirit that swayed the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and others against our Saviour, in his time on earth, breathing still in too many, who will have always somewhat to say against faithfull and painfull Ministers, as the *Jews* had against Christ, though to no purpose more, than to bewray their own ignorance, malice, and madness. And I shall now give some instances, as I finde them, that so men may see themselves precedented in the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and Infidel hard-hearted *Jews* that liv'd in our Saviours time. *Mat.* 22. 23. The *Sadducees* could not believe the Resurrection, and a stout Argument they bring to puzzle our Saviour withall; an instance of a Woman that had seven Husbands successively, *&c.*

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and what did all this prove more, than their ignorance of Scripture, as Christ tells them? *vers.* 29. At another time, when some said, *This is the Christ*; others said, *Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Joan.* 7. 41. and they alledge Scripture for it, That *Christ cometh out of Bethlehem, v.* 42. and this bred a quarrel among them, of which there was no cause, nor the least occasion, more than their own Ignorance: for had they had more grace, or wit, they might easily have reconciled themselves by knowing that Christ was born in *Bethlehem*, though bred up in *Galilee*, for good reason, according to the Scripture, *Mat.* 2. 23. Such was their exception against Christ, *Joan.* 6. 42. *Is not this the son of Joseph?* He was indeed *God manifest in the flesh*, and the Scriptures had plainly enough pointed him out as *Abraham's* Seed, and *David's* Son. To say no more in this kind; Nothing but ignorance of the mysterie of Faith, and a froward humour could make them say, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat, Joan.* 6. 52. it shews they had a minde to quarrel, and nothing else; as when *Joan.* 7. 15. they askt, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* saith *Calvin* on the place, *Hoc ipso despiciunt gratiam Dei, quia ipsorum captum superat. Nam ea est hominum ingratitudo, ut in æstimandis Dei operibus, semper sibi accersant errandi materiam*: Men study wayes and means to make themselves mistake, when they have to deal in the matters of God, and their own salvation: they are blind enough in the things of Gods kingdome, and yet quick-sighted too in devising stumbling-blocks to hinder

1 Tim. 3. fin.

hinder themselves and others from obtaining a sound and saving knowledge of the truth. And hence, *Joan.7.* 28. when they were a quarrelling, and saying, *When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*, he cryed in the Temple as he taught, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am. Where* (saith *Calvin*) *Christ inveighs against their madness, that pleasing themselves in their false conceits of him, they shut up against themselves the right way of knowing him as they ought*: as if he should have said, *By your knowing all things, you know nothing at all.* And so they were, as some since, apt to pick quarrels with some Ministers especially, and to gain a reputation of knowing men, do talk at a very high rate of others low parts and learning: These are the Champions, that lead up others to quarrel all Doctrines preach'd, unless they please their humour, or suite with their high-flown conceits and notions: but (as *Calvin* hath it somewhere,) *There is no worse plague or pestilence can take hold of men, than to be intoxicated with a conceit of their own understanding, and to be carried by it, to a confident slighting whatever agreeth not with their own opinion*; such great Rabbies are ready to say, *This people who knoweth not the Law, are cursed*, they know so much, as others can know nothing; and yet know nothing as they ought to know, or what's worth others learning; seeing in their lives they savour nothing of true Religion and Godliness: whatever their learning be, their Religion (if any) is very ordinary, and they are ignorant enough too of the right way and method of bringing poor ignorant souls to the sound and saving know-

Joan.7.49.

knowledge of Christ. There is (let me say) a simplicity in the mysterie of Christ, and of Godlineſs, which if a man once savour, he hath the only beſt way to teach others convincingly; and he that's not acquainted with it, will be but a sounding braſs, and a tinckling Cymbal, though he should speak with the tongue of men and Angels. And therefore, if the men that quarrel the simplicity of Preaching, that sutes beſt with the capacities of people, be not guilty of ignorance, it is to be feared, there is somewhat elſe as bad, or rather much worſe. They had need look, that this quarrelsom humour proceed not from a root of malice, and enmitie againſt the things of God, as I fear it doth; for the Myſteries of Gods kingdome being of higheſt concernment, and moſt excellently uſefull to all, deſerve none of our quarrellings. But when men cannot abide to deny their humours and intereſts, to receive the kingdome of God as little children, no marvel if they kindle a fire, and are all in a flame, even to rage againſt God and his pure Word; which because they are aſham'd to own, they muſt colour it over with somewhat that may be thought worthy of their indignation. And 'tis ſtrange to ſee, how witty the moſt are, to cover the ſhame of their malice, in deviſing and finding out occaſions of quarrelling at thoſe things which concern their Salvation. Sometimes they have quarrell'd a Miniſters infirmities of body, which are not his ſins, but his ſufferings; and if they can ſpy out any other failings, (though no more than infirmities, incident to the beſt of men) what ſad work will their little wit make of them, to hold

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up a curſed prejudice againſt all that is taught them, in order to the ſaving of their ſouls? Sometimes he is a man of no great parts, and ſometimes he is not ſo well bred, as to know very much of complement; or his utterance is bad, or ſomewhat elſe there is, that they do not like him; ſome are too wordly, and many are too faſhionable. And I verily believe, there is not one of them without his faults; nor am I now about to excuſe any thing that's blame-worthy. Only, I ſay again, there's a root of bitterneſs in the hearts of all men, and from this root ſpring all, or moſt of the quarrels, that are againſt painful and faithful Miniſters. Were it not for this, men could never be ſo apt to pick up, and ſpy out ſo many occaſions of exception againſt them. In a word, They like not the Doctrine, and how ſhould they be pleaſed with him that brings it? He that likes not the Phyſick, will never be pleaſed with the Doctour, whatever he be. Truly, that which the Holy Ghoſt hath recorded of *Ahab* is worthy our obſervation: when *Jehoſhaphat* ſaid, *Is there not here a Prophet of the Lord beſides, that we might enquire of him?* Yea ſaith *Ahab*, *there is yet one man, but I hate him, for he doth not propheſie good concerning me, but evil*, 1 *Reg.* 22. 8. he confeſſes him to be a Prophet of the Lord, but yet he cannot away with him, and you ſee his reaſon for it. Alas! what ſhould a man of God (as *Micaiah* was) propheſie other than evil, concerning ſuch a one as *Ahab*, *Who had ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs in the ſight of the Lord*, 1 *Reg.* 21. 20. I know no occaſion given by ſome Miniſters, more than

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Micaiah gave to *Ahab*; and yet they are hated. And therefore the quarrels of many (whatever they say) are against God, and his Word. 'Twas God that put the word into the mouth of *Micaiah*, and 'tis God that puts the sentence of condemnation into the mouths of Ministers, that ungodly Sinners are damn'd, if they live and die impenitent. And all these quarrelsome people cannot but know, it is so. And yet they quarrel the Ministers, for preaching damnation, and driving men to despair. For my part, I never knew, or heard of a Minister, that had forgotten God and himself so farr, as to pass sentence upon Sinners, otherwise than as God hath pass'd it in his written Word, and as Christ hath twice expressed it, *Luc.* 13. *v.* 3, and 5. *Except ye repent, ye shall perish.* And this exception is alwayes intended and implyed, though in many Texts of Scripture it be not express'd *in terminis*. And thus the most thundring denunciations of vengeance, against ungodly Sinners, from the Ministers, should be by all understood; so as there would be no quarrel upon that account, if there were not in mens hearts a root that beareth gall and poyson. *Ro.* 2. 8. The Apostle joyns the contentious, and the disobedient together. And why? Because they never goe asunder. When a man cannot frame himself to obey, then he seeks out some occasion or other, to contend against the truth; else how shall he satisfie himself and others in his disobedience? Seldome do men arrive at such an height of desperate rebellion against God, as to proclaim their enmity, with open mouth, in plain down-right terms: No,

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there must be some colour, and this is one, That they are not satisfied about their Ministers. And 'tis not strange, for they are indeed unsatisfied with the very Word of God. And hence some are ever and anon questioning, how such or such a place of Scripture may be reconcil'd with another. Now, for my part, I blame no man for seeking to satisfie himself in any seeming contradiction: And more than seeming, I am sure, there is none; unless the Transcriber, or Printer, may have abused the Text in some one Copy or Edition. But men had need look to their own hearts, whether there be not an inward secret desire, to find out somewhat, that may countenance that contradiction, which is naturally in all men against the Laws & Wills of God. One thing I have observ'd too often, That some are very inquisitive this way, who seem not to be overmuch affected towards Scripture: Or, however they be affected, they shew little conformity to it in their conversations.

Now, my advice, upon this occasion, is, That most men would let more difficult places of Scripture alone, and study those which are more easie to be understood. There can be nothing plainer than Gods Commandments, and all those Precepts which concern our duty in denying all ungodliness, *&c.* In all those, I am sure, there is not the least shew of contradiction. And for the places, that seem not so well to agree, let the advice of sober and learned men be desired, with an unfeigned intention, to know the mind of God, in order to our practice. 'Tis the observation of one, *That it is the sign of a man inclin'd*

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to *Atheism, to keep a register of many difficult places, not to be satisfied himself, but to puzzle others.* Sure, they that are often in setting many places of Scripture to fight one against another, may be suspected of a desire to make a real contradiction, where there is but a seeming one. To say no more of this, The contradictions in Scripture, that seem so to us, are not therefore such indeed; and if we, and others, cannot reconcile them, we should rather impute ignorance to our selves, and think, that we mistake things that differ, as if they were contradictory.

The Argument I have next before prosecuted, was drawn from the aptness that is in most to quarrel their Ministers. And what manner of Ministers are they, who are so much expos'd to quarrels? To be sure, they are none of the worst. For they that are so apt to quarrel some, upon any account, can like others well enough, though indeed they deserve little respect, being the unsavory salt, fit for no place, but the dunghill. But they like them well enough; the worse they are in themselves, the better they are to them. If the Ministers will deal by them (as *David* would have had his beloved *Absalom* dealt withall) gently and fairly, and not speak too loud, for fear of waking them, 'tis as much as they care for. So there be somewhat, call'd Preaching, and the Minister be sometimes in the Pulpit, no great matter what he, or his preaching be. They love a Sermon, that will lay them asleep; and sometimes somewhat, that will set them (perhaps) a laughing. And when 'tis so, they can sit out a whole glass, and

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have much patience. But they cannot abide rayling (as they call it.) They would have Preachers keep to their Texts, when indeed they cannot abide ſound Doctrine, that ranſacks Conſcience, and ſearcheth out their ſins, though it be deliver'd in the very language of Scripture, and be the expreſs Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles. And yet they are pleas'd at heart many times, to hear, that which is rayling indeed, that is, Gibing, and jeering, and girding at the wayes of truth and holineſs, under ſuch nick-names and miſpriſions, as the Devil hath devis'd to put upon them. Theſe are the men, that in all their lives, never met with any ſolid Arguments, or Reaſons ſufficient to convince them. They could never light on ſuch preaching, or Preachers, as could perſwade them to goe in ſome mens wayes of preciſeneſs, or prevail with them to change their way. And all this is too true, and I am ſorry for it; though not ſo ſad as theſe men will be one day, if they be no better perſwaded. True, they have heard ſome of thoſe Miniſters, that are ſo much cryed up by ſome; but they could never ſee in them, any ſuch light, as was to them convincing. And all this I believe, without any more proof, though it be nothing to their purpoſe. There were multitudes that heard the Son of God preaching to them, and were not perſwaded or convinced, but many were the more hardned: What then? Was it becauſe there was not light enough in the Sun of Righteouſneſs, that ſo many did not ſee it? He knew well enough how to preach ſo, as the Auditory might be moſt profited. *He taught*

unto having authority, and not as the Scribes. Mat. 7. 29.
Never man spake, as he spake, Joan. 7. 46. At Nazareth *all bare him witnesse, and wondred at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth,* Luc. 4. 22. And yet were offended at him, as appears in the next words: *Is not this* Joseph's *son?* So it is still (as one saith on that place) *The course of our Hearers is, to look round about, if possibly they may find any hole in our coat, through which to slight, and slip the cords of our Doctrine, though they cannot but admire it. Our Saviours Doctrine was not his own, but his Father's that sent him,* Joan. 7. 16. And for the manner, *He had the tongue of the Learned,* Esay 50. 4. He deliver'd himself so plainly, that the simplest might understand him; and yet so powerfully, that his enemies confess'd, *He taught the way of God truly,* Mat. 22. 14. He was none of those illiterate, careless, and cold Preachers, that can only tire out their Auditors, or lull them asleep. And yet all his labour was in vain, as to the most of those that heard him. Surely the fault was in them. For they must needs have seen the glorious Light, that shin'd in his Sermons, if they had not shut their eyes, that they might not see it. We may well think of them, as of others, who will goe after their blind guides, even when the light of the glorious Gospel shines most clearly before them. Our Saviour in the dayes of his flesh, was as much cryed down by many, yea, as any of his Servants since, or before. *This is an hard saying, who can bear it?* Joan. 6. 60. So spake some of his Doctrine. Yet there are none amongst us,

but will say, It was the fault of his Auditors; and that all his Doctrine was true, and right, and good. If an Angel from Heaven should preach the Gospel of Christ, he should not perswade, or please some men. And 'tis no marvel, seeing God himself could not preach to perswade the unbelieving *Jews*. There's light enough in the Sun, though blind folk cannot see it. Surely, the light of Gospel-grace hath broken out, and shone most gloriously in these our times, though many thousands have shut their eyes against it, and still remain in the blackness of sin and ignorance, *because they loved darkness rather than light*, Joan. 3. 19. And as light as men make of it now, *God will come, and not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him: He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that they may judge his people.* His people are *Israel* after the flesh *, such as were outwardly in Covenant with him, and an holy Nation, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, as they are now to others. They are in our English Translation call'd *his Saints*, or *holy ones*; by others, *his meek ones*. The Original (as farr as I understand) notes those that have obtained favour and kindness from the Lord: So had all *Abraham's* Seed, in comparison of the *Gentiles*; though we may say with good reason, that all are so called, because some among them were truly sanctified, inwardly and really in Covenant with God. Certain it is, that God in that place, sounds an alarum to all ungracious and hypocritical professors, that applaud themselves in the ceremonious out-

Psal. 50. 3, 4.

* Saints at large. Exod. 19. 6.

outside of true Religion, when they are as farr from the life and power of it, as professed Infidels. Such are too many now adayes, that have nothing of true Religion, beside the name and profession; shewing in their lives and conversations, an implacable diflike of true holiness. They will abide no more, than a bare outside form of somewhat that's call'd Religion; and a Ministry they will have for the management of this Religion, as suitable as *Jeroboams* Priests were to his Calves. As for such a dispensation of Gods Ordinances, as hath life and power in it, they will not endure it; for they are resolv'd to serve their lusts, in all manner of unrighteousness and ungodliness. And these are the men, that cry out, they are not satisfied in their Consciences, but they must have more Light to convince them, and better Arguments to perswade them, or ever they can embrace those pretise wayes, which some would have to be the only good way, that leads men to their happiness. Such were the *Jews* of old, that persecuted the Prophets, and would abide none, but those that cryed peace, peace to them, even whilst they walked after their own imaginations, and did those things that brought upon them the curse and vengeance that God had threatned against them. Now, whether these, and such as these, have any just cause to complain of God, for being wanting to them in the means of Grace, and saving Knowledge, let any judge. I must proceed.

Arg. 9. TO all aforesaid, I shall add that humour in many, so like to what was in the Scribes, and Pharisees, and others in our Saviours time, who would have of him a sign from Heaven. So are many now adayes, that cannot be satisfied, without some extraordinary appearances of God, that may be an infallible Demonstration of the Doctrines, so much commended to them, for their instruction in righteousnes. No question, they that have fill'd the World with stories of strange Miracles pretended to be done by their Party, in all ages, for confirmation of their way, were sufficiently aware of this humour in men; and the Apostle hath given all the World a fair warning of it, 2 *Thess.* 2. 9, 10. The rich man in Hell was of the mind, *That if one went from the Dead unto his Brethren, they would repent.* But we have no great cause to be much taken with his opinion, when we consider in what place he was, specially when we have the opinion of *Abraham* in Heaven to the contrary. He was indeed in a great mistake, as well as many others on Earth. An uncircumcised heart will not regard the commands of God, though they be sent by the hand of an Angel. *Israel* had the Law from the mouth of God himself, and yet they continued not in his Covenant *. Many instances there have been of men, that, in the midst of Gods most terrible and miraculous appearances, have taken occasion of letting out their malice the more. *Israel provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red Sea,* Psa. 106. 7. Psa. 78. 32. *For all this*

Mat. 16. 1.

Luc. 16. 30, 31.

* Read *Act.* 4. 16, 17. where we have an Instance, what Miracles will do upon some men.

his they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. I will not say, that all wicked men have been alwayes alike affected, as they were then and there: For Gods Judgements in the Earth, have sometimes cool'd the courage of his stoutest enemies, so as they have not dared to go forward, as otherwise they would have done. The Plagues upon *Egypt*, put *Pharaoh* sometimes into a good mood, and made him to relent a little for the present: But he was never the better, though awed a while by the hand of God against him. We read indeed, *Act.* 9. 6. that the Lord Jesus appeared to *Saul* (afterwards call'd *Paul*) in a dreadful manner, and struck him down to the ground, in order to his conversion: But that was only to tame him, that so he might be talk'd withall. If the Lord had then left him, and taken no more thought and care of him, I may well question, whether *Saul* would have ever been the better man, for that terrible appearance of God to him. Sure I am, that God instructed him by his own immediate voice from Heaven, and then afterwards sent him to *Ananias*, by whom (as a Minister of God) he was taught, what he must do. And if it had not been thus, we may justly doubt, whether *Paul* had ever been setled in a sound belief, or encouraged to a zealous profession, and preaching of the Gospel. I am willing to grant, That the Lord hath taken some such course with some others, for their conversion: I mean, He hath, by his hand, brought them down to the earth, and made afflictions to tame their proud and haughty Spirits, so as they have said, It was good

for them, that they were so handled and humbled. But afflictions do but tame men, Gods Word and Spirit alone teach them, and bring the heart to a due acknowledgement of Gods authority. And this is certain, because though some have been wrought upon by Gods more than ordinary appearances to them, in his providential dispensations; yet others have remain'd as *Pharaoh* did, and never were humbled so, as to make their peace with God. Men may think, if an Angel from Heaven did preach to them, or a damned Soul from Hell appear to them, to confirm by their testimony, the truths that are often tendred them, by men like themselves, they should certainly believe, and obey, and make no further question: But they know not of what Spirit they are. Never was there such a sign from Heaven, as the Son of God dwelling in our flesh; and yet how little were the *Jews* satisfied with it? No, not in the least, but they must have some other sign to demonstrate him, to be what he was, or else they could not believe on him. Yea, and though they had their desire in this also, yet all was to as little purpose: *For though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him*, Joan. 12. 37. If any suppose, they could not see the Sun of Righteousness, because he was clouded over with our flesh: I say, That that veil served only to allay the exceeding brightness of his glory, which otherwise no mortal eye could have been able to approach or behold. It did not hide him so, as they could not possibly see him; but it shewed him so, as they might be able to look on him, as we

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can abide to look on the Sun, ſhining through a bright cloud, which would dazle, and almoſt put out our eyes, if it ſhin'd out in his full ſtrength. And therefore our Saviour appeals to his works and doings, which were abundantly enough to ſhew, what he was, though covered under a cloud. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man did* (ſaith he) *they had not had ſin: But now have they both ſeen, and hated both me, and my Father*, Joan. 15. 24. Where by [WORKS] he means all the evidences and demonſtrations of his Divine power, given by him, for their conviction. And to inſtance only in one, Did ever man command and controll the Devil, as he did, and that only in his own name and power? This work of his, was ſuch a clear and undeniable proof, as he thereupon charged ſome of them with the unpardonable ſin, *Becauſe they ſaid, he had an unclean Spirit, Marc.* 3. 30. They ſaid, that what he did, was no more, than what Witches and Conjurers can do, by virtue of a compact; when they could not but ſee, it was by the finger and power of God. This was blaſphemy, not of ignorance, as *Pauls* was, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. but of voluntary contumacy. For (as *Calvin*) *They ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, who maliciouſly pervert, to Gods diſhonour and reproach, the mighty works of God, manifeſted to them by his Spirit for this end, that they might thereupon ſhew forth his glory; and ſo profeſs themſelves enemies of God, ſuch as the Devil is.* Hence our Saviour chargeth them with malice, *Joan.* 15. 24. *Ye have ſeen and hated both me, and my Father*; becauſe they

they so basely undervalued and blasphemed that power, which shewed it self in him, to be altogether Divine. For he was not wanting to the work, which his Father had given him to do, and that work was, to shew himself to the World, to be, as he was, the Son of God. For this end and purpose he did, what no other had done, or could do. But all could not satisfie an *evil and adulterous Generation*, as he calls them, *Matt.* 12. 39. They were still calling upon him for a sign from Heaven. He had done indeed some miracles (they could not deny it) in curing some poor, sick and leprous persons: But what were these? Not enough, nor great enough to convince them, that he was the very Christ. *They must have a sign from Heaven*, such as *Joshua* shewed, when the Sun stood still, *Jos.* 10. 12. Or as *Esaias* shewed, when the Sun went backward, 2 *Reg.* 20. 11. Or as *Moses* shewed, when he made bread to come down from Heaven. And the last they mention, *Joan.* 6. 30, 31. *What sign shewest thou, that we may see, and believe thee? Our Fathers did eat Manna, as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven.* They must have such a demonstration, as might be an evidence beyond all contradiction. Alas! Our Saviour knew, as well as themselves, nothing he could do, would keep them from contradicting him. 'Twas only a vain and wicked pretence in them, that if they could be assured, he was the Messias, they would forthwith believe in him. But they dissembled, and Christ calls them Hypocrites, *Luc.* 12. 56. And *he sighed deeply in his Spirit*, *Marc.* 8. 12. knowing it was their hardness and malice, to make so much adoe about miracles.

And

And this he proves, *Luc.* 12. 56. *Ye can discern the face of the Sky*, &c. They were wise enough in other matters, and could make observations one day, what weather would be the next. And therefore he pincheth them close, *v.* 57. *Yea, and why even of your selves judge ye not what is right?* If they would but have examin'd their own Consciences, and enquired there, what was right, and to be resolved upon in the case, they need be no longer in doubt. I have been the larger in this Instance, because it serves to shew, what Spirit they are of, who are ever and anon harping upon the same string, and making in a manner the same demands. O! If they had but a sign from Heaven, if they could once be certainly assur'd of such and such matters, what would not they do? They are as ready, as any men alive, to receive and entertain whatever shall be offer'd to them, as the mind and command of God. 'Tis pity they should live, that are otherwise minded. But you must bear with them, if they are not so well satisfied with some things, For truly (believe them the that list) they never had light clear enough as yet, to convince them. If these Preachers, and they that pretend so much to preciseness, could but shew some sign from Heaven, could but give some evidence of their way, such as could not be contradicted, they need not compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes; For they, and many more, would be at their devotion.

But all this while, these men, that cannot be satisfied with any Arguments, can satisfie themselves in the constant practice of such abominati-

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ons, as the Heathens would be ashamed of, and swallow down every day such foul evils, as the Light of Nature and Reason have sufficiently discover'd to all. Truly these men are sick of the *Jews* disease, who expected a Messiah, such as God never promis'd or intended; and when the Messiah came in another way than they counted on, they would none of him, he was not for their turn, what should they do with such a one? Or what could he do for them? They must have a Messiah to reign in all worldly pomp and state, so as they might be a people, to rule over all the Nations. A poor despised fellow, with a few Fishermen to attend him, to be the Messiah, so long expected. They can never be perswaded to this, unless there were more cogent Arguments, than he had given them. Just so do others fancy to themselves a way to Heaven, such as God never counted upon, but the way of God indeed, such as Christ hath laid out in his Word, and traced it himself before them, a way of self-deniall, and crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts, who shall perswade them, that this is the way to Heaven? They can never believe it, unless a man come from the Dead to assure them of it. And so they goe on quarrelling with any thing, that looks but like true Religion, and Holiness, and circumspect walking, which Scripture makes the only way to Heaven. They see no such thing in Scripture, nor can those strait lac'd Preachers say enough to perswade them, there's any necessity of so much precisenes, unless they could work some strange and unheard of thing, to demonstrate their nice

opinions.

opinions. And for the parts and gifts of those preachers, they know not but some others have as much learning as they, and yet are not of their mind. They must therefore do somewhat more than ordinary, or these men will never be perswaded to their way. To these men I shall say no more, than that the mind of God in Scripture hath as full and uncontrollable authority, as any extraordinary Revelations possibly can have; and let them except what they can, I'le undertake to shew as much, and more to be excepted against any way of Revelation which they would have. They who are not satisfied with Scripture, will be satisfied with nothing, whatever some pretend or imagine. And to say no more, it is a most absurd and unreasonable thing, for any man to expect Revelations of Gods will, in an extraordinary way, when he hath so fully and plainly made known all things, in a way less lyable to exception than any other. 'T were easie to shew, how hard it would be for most men to discern true miracles from false. And what a business would it be, for every particular person to have a particular Revelation. Besides, such appearances of God would be more dreadful to poor Creatures. Not to say, how often the Devil might transform himself into an Angel of light. Whereas Scripture is a sure word, that hath been tryed, and alwayes found constant and consistent with it self. And for the truth of it, (if there were no more) it may contend upon rational grounds, for probability, with any pretence, that hath been, or (I think) can be to the contrary. And therefore to those that must

2 Pet. 1. 19.

have

have extraordinary wayes to convert them, I say, they are tempters of God, in tying him to miracles, when he hath appointed ordinary means; and do in effect refuse the food that's offer'd them, looking when God will rain bread from Heaven upon them.

Arg. 10. THat I may yet further evidence, that men want not Light, but only neglect the means allowed them, I give this Reason, That so many make a kind of profession to be what indeed they are not, and cannot abide to be counted as they are, and to be call'd by their own names. They that are as debauch'd as any miscreants on earth, will not abide to be so accounted, yea, will avouch themselves to be farr otherwise. He that uses deceit in bargaining upon all occasions, would be thought as honest as any man alive. *The Adulterer waiteth for the twilight*, Job 24. 15. And the *Adulteress wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness*, Pro. 30. 20. Now, when the vilest of men give it out, and would have others believe, that they are such as they should, and ought to be, is not this an Argument of conviction, that they do know what they ought to do, and do the contrary? Where do you meet with any, that will openly proclaim their wickedness, or affirm that vices are vertues; that Drunkenness, Swearing, *&c.* are duties that ought to be done? No, for the most part, men are asham'd, and will not own these; and yet continuing

tinuing in the practice of them, do they not sin condemn'd of themselves? They do know the baseness of their evil wayes, and notwithstanding goe on in them. And with what face can they plead, That if they had known the good, and the right way, they would have walked in it? Wherefore they shall be their own Judges, when they are to be condemn'd before the Lord at the last day.

Arg. 11. AND why do many betake themselves to do somewhat for making their peace (as they pretend) with God? This (if there were nothing else) serves to prove, they are somewhat convinc'd of their wayes and doings, that they are not so good as they should be. But in the doing of it, they discover the wretched untowardliness of their hearts, and how little they prize the things, which God hath promised to all them that diligently seek him. For commonly they betake themselves to pitiful poor shifts. It may be, when they are going out of the world, they can find in their hearts to spare a little somewhat to some good uses, after they have all their life long been making more poor, than all their estates are able to relieve; yea, done more wrong, than their estates are able to recompence. And some will keep their Church better, than ever before, if they live to it; and sometimes read a Chapter, or in some good Book. But for ransacking of Conscience, and tipping up old sins to the bottom, and renoun-

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cing the vain wayes, whereunto they are (as all others) inclin'd, and turning from all iniquity, and betaking themselves to the most strict and precise way of walking with God, *in all his Commandments blameless, as* Zechariah *and* Elizabeth *did*, Luc. 1. 6. As they never knew before, what belongs to them, so they are still willing to let them alone. They cannot be ignorant (unless willingly) that their duty is to be humbled, as low as Hell, and to receive the sentence of death in themselves, and shew it in all possible contrition and humiliation, and denying themselves in all they formerly delighted in, and in walking so, as all that see them, may have cause to say, Surely God hath wrought some great change upon them. But they can content themselves with less, and hope, God will be as well pleas'd with it, as they themselves are. So you shall have some turn'd, it may be, from open prophaneness and debauchery, to a more sober civil way of life, and perhaps somewhat of an empty outside formality. This is an acknowledgement, that God must have somewhat more, than he hath had formerly. But this poor pittance will be a strong evidence against them one day, that they did not follow hard after God, as they might and should have done. For if men did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light that shines in Scripture, to shew the good and right way of seeking after God, they could not but know, that the utmost degree of self-denial and mortification, with deepest humiliation before God, and all holy conversation and godliness, is the only way to find

find him. Such slight work as they make, serves only to shew, they are not willing to do better, and therefore can in reason expect no great reward. For (I say again) men cannot be ignorant, (except willingly) that the enjoying of God for their portion, is so rare and rich a prize, as nothing can be thought enough for procuring it; and such a slight dealing in a matter of so great concernment, is an Argument to evidence, that they goe against their own light, and so are condemned of themselves.

And what do many in the whole course of their lives, more than trifle about somewhat, which is indeed nothing to any purpose? They know after a sort, the only true way to eternal life, which is believing on the Son of God. They are also (we suppose it however) sober and civil in their behaviour towards others. But for their Religion towards God, it being (we grant) as to the outward profession, right as it should be, they content themselves with the outside, which is the easiest part of it, being least irksome to the flesh, and that which pinches least upon their worldly and fleshly interests. And thus they approve their skill, in finding out a easie way to Heaven. For this I may (I hope) affirm without offence to any, That the Protestant Religion (so call'd, and to me the only true Religion) in the bodily exercise, and outside observance, is farr more easie than any other. And there is good reason for it, seeing the grace of God, in these Gospel-times, calls mostly for worshipping God in the Spirit. The Jews had an hard task (indeed a kind of bondage)

dage) in the outside of Gods service, which put them to great pains and cost. But Christians now have as little as may be of the bodily exercise, because the more full discoveries of Gospel grace call us now, to offer up our selves, as so many living Sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, and call'd a reasonable service, because according as God hath prescrib'd. And 'tis indeed the main and chiefest part of Gods service now, to mortifie our earthly members, and crucifie the flesh, with the affections and lusts, with abridging our selves in all that may gratifie Self; conforming our selves, and coming as near as possible, to that more blessed and glorious life wherein there will be no use or need at all of these present comforts and accommodations.

Now what do many call'd Protestants other than by their practices deny the great things of the Gospel, and contradict our Saviour Jesus Christ, in what he said, *Mat.* 7. 14. That the gate which leads to life eternal, is strait, and the way narrow? For they make it as wide and easie as any man can devise to make it. Surely it is no hard labour to goe to Church once in a week, and receive the Sacrament once or twice in a year, and say over by rote a few conn'd Prayers once or twice in a day, when they are half a sleep: And yet this is the most service that many do to God, and it may be doubted if many do so much. Now, if the course these men take, be the good, and the right way, they need not strive much, the gate is wide, and the way is broad enough, who can miss it, or goe beside it? Questionless, the very Heathens serve the Devil

and

and their Idols, at more coſt, and charge, and pains taking, than all this comes to. To ſpeak it as it is, the true Religion is the moſt eaſie of all others, as to the outward bodily exerciſe; and all the difficulty that attends it, is in Self-denial, being crucified to the World; and in the more ſpiritual part of worſhip, whiles a man labours to keep his heart in a due frame and order, by watching againſt the ſecret riſings of his inward corruptions, with all the ſubtle inſinuations of Satan, ſo as at all times, and upon all occaſions, as well as in his more direct addreſſes to God, he is put to watch and ward, to fence and fight, and all little enough to prevent the aſſaults of his enemies, and preſerve himſelf from the infection of ſin. Oh! What a difficulty is there in gathering up a mans thoughts and affections in duty, and keeping a ſtrait hand upon them all the while? To abandon vanity in diſcourſe, and in our own hearts, to curb, and keep in, what will be ready to break out, yea, and to nipp the early buddings of corruption, e're they grow, and get head, is work that will require labour, and care, and pains. So is it alſo, to have our converſation alwayes in Heaven, by ſetting our affections on things above, continually muſing and meditating on Eternity, and that happineſs which never ſhall have end; with minding alwayes what may ſerve for the accompliſhment of our deſires, in the enjoyment of God; and watching againſt all hindrances from the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, that may obſtruct our paſſage, whiles we are here in our pilgrimage. 'Tis no eaſie matter to deny our ſelves, in the

desires of the flesh, spetially, when we see the most to use a liberty, with a fair pretence of conveniency, and necessary accommodation. 'Tis hard to keep a bridle on our lips, and much harder to keep it on our hearts. And what ado must there be, to observe and try our wayes, so as all may be according to Rule; and what diligence also is required, in calling our selves to an account every day, so as to clear up our Evidences, that there may be nothing to interrupt a fair and free correspondency between God and our Souls? Now this harder part of Christianity many curtall, yea, cut it off, and cast it quite away, never caring for it, so much as seriously to have any thoughts about it; and content themselves with an outside carkass (as I may call it) of the true Religion, that hath nothing of life or Soul in it. However, they will one day find that this easie and empty formality of bodily exercise, will be a swift witness against them, that they might have done better, if they would.

Arg. 12. TO say no more in way of Argument, Let it be consider'd, what many, yea most are wont to do, when they are in apparent hazards of death, or in any deadly dangers. Do they not then, as the Mariners, cry every man to his God? Then men are affected mostly one of these two wayes: Either they cry out lamentably, yea, even howl for vexation of Spirit, bewailing their loss of precious time and their mis-spending those Talents, which might

Jon. 1. 4, 5. Psa. 107. 28.

might have been employed for their Souls advantage: Or they lye as men ſtruck in the head, and their heart (as *Nabals*) dyes within them, ſo as they become as ſtones or ſtocks, that have no ſenſe. Now what doth this ſignifie? Even that, which I have been diſcourſing hitherto. So long as men have eaſe and health, youth and ſtrength, and feel no evils or troubles, their luſts are lively, and alwayes kindling into a flame, and hence there's alwayes a miſt of ſmoke and darkneſs in their Souls, ſuch as hides and overwhelms all the notions they have of God, or any thing that's good, ſo as they never conſider, what ſhall be the end of their madd mirth, ſinful vanities, or horrid impieties. But the ſenſe of approaching Death quenches all the flame of their luſts, and when the ſmoke of that fire is once diſpell'd, their natural principles, or any other light they have had, appear again to act, as they would have done before, had they not been oppreſs'd, and as it were buried under the rubbiſh of fleſhly and filthy luſts.

To this purpoſe we may obſerve, what the Pſalmiſt hath, *Pſal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that the Nations may know themſelves to be but men.* They were intollerably inſolent and outragious, taking no notice of God, nor caring for him, ſo long as they had their wills, and felt no troubles. Hence the Pſalmiſt prayes God, to put them in fear, *i. e.* to bring upon them ſome horrible tempeſt of his wrath, and to give a proof of his power in ſome remarkable judgement, that ſo they might come to themſelves. I have cited this Text only to ſhew, That *David*

was of this mind, That men will quake and tremble at the sense of Gods Judgements, which they would not before, so long as they feared no danger. And why? Because in times of prosperity, the smoke of mens lusts smothers the operation of all their principles, so as they can have no effect. But Death hath a gastly look, because it is a fore-runner of Judgement, and men are appal'd at the very thoughts of it, putting them off so long as possibly they can. However at last it comes, and then, when there's no longer help nor hope, Oh no such welcome Visitants as good people, nothing so desirable as their prayers. They do not then rejoyce, and boast themselves in their wickedness. No, They are sorry for their sins, and wish they had led their lives in wayes of godliness, truth and righteousness. Questionless they are then tame, and may be talk'd withall, at least the most of them. For now their eyes are opened, to see what before they would not, but might have seen if they would. And is not this a cogent Argument, to convince ungodly Sinners, that they wittingly and willingly stifled the Light that shin'd in them, to shew them the only way to rest and peace. Who then shall bear the blame, but themselves? This one Evidence, if there were no more, is enough to give the Verdict for God, against all ungodly men.

I hope now enough hath been said, to prove the general Proposition, laid down in the beginning, so as I may now proceed to make some Application of the whole.

But

But there's one Objection more, that must be removed, and it is this, or to this purpose, *Viz.*

Obj. That I have discours'd a great deal, to prove men guilty of their own destruction, by shewing, that they goe against their own Light and Consciences, and so condemn themselves in what they do. But I have not all this while shewed them, how to find that good and right way, which leadeth unto life. This had need be done, and never more, than in these, and the late times. *You tell us* (will some say) *a great deal of our wilfullness and frowardness, in going against our light. But can you tell, What light shall lead us, in so many perplexities of Opinions, when every one calls us to his way, and none of them knows how to assure us, which is the good, and the right way? You seem to make but one right way, and how shall we know where it lyeth, when there are so many wayes cryed up, and every one is pretended to be the only good way? We have need of a clue to lead us out of such a labyrinth, for else 'tis impossible for us to find our way.*

Sol. This is indeed a Question worth the answering, and 'twill not be much beside my design, to say somewhat about it.

For the many various and different perswasions of men, in matters of Religion, are enough to stumble those, who will be glad of any occasion, to quarrel the way of their own Salvation. And for their sakes, I shall say, what I am able, to give them satisfaction, if it may be.

That there are many and different perswasions of men, about the matters of God, is that

which cannot be denied. But that those different perswasions ought to hinder our enquiries, or are a sufficient excuse for our carelesness, about the concernments of our Souls, I deny, and for my denial I give these following Reasons.

First, If such differences were a ground sufficient to excuse us, then all that went Heaven-way, since the beginning of the World almost might plead it, as well as we. For what age or time can be shewed, when it was otherwise? Differences of Religion are indeed sad, but they are no new things. *Adam*'s Children were soon divided about Religion, or else we had not read Gen. 6. 2. of *the Sons of God, and the Daughters of men*, so early in the World. 'Tis plain, they all then professed not one way, or if they did, they were Ibid. farr divided in their practices. As *Noah walked with God, when all flesh had corrupted his way*. And after the Flood, were they not divided in their Religions, as much as in their Languages? Who so reads the Story recorded in *Genesis*, may see the World was peopled with those, that serv'd some one God, and some another; and few were they that serv'd the living and true God, in a right manner, and yet some such there were in all ages. How was *Israel* divided, about the way of worshipping God, after the rent made by *Jeroboam*? And not to be tedious in Instances, How many Sects were there in Christ's time, and before? Yea, and presently after the Gospel was published, how did Sects arise and swarm in every corner of the World? And how it hath been ever since, they must be very ig-

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rant, that do not know. But what of all this? God had his faithful Servants, that followed him in the good old way of truth and holineſs, in all thoſe times; and we never read or hear of any complaints they made, That there were ſo many opinions and perſwaſions, as they could not tell which to follow. No, they did, as all others ought to do, apply themſelves to ſearch and enquire what way God had preſcribed, and ſeeking it in ſincerity, with all their hearts, they found out that way, wherein they found reſt to their Souls. For this purpoſe, obſerve the reſolution of Gods people, as you have it, *Micah* 4. 5. Though other people pleaſed themſelves in their ſuperſtitions, and oppoſed themſelves againſt them, yet they reſolved to ſtick faſt to the wayes of God in his Word. *God indeed ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own wayes*, before Chriſts coming in the fleſh, otherwiſe than afterwards, in that Goſpel-grace was not publiſhed throughout the World equally and indifferently to the *Gentiles*, as to the *Jews*. And God hath ſince ſuffered men to ariſe in the Chriſtian Church, and teach perverſe things, and ſo there have grown many Sects and Parties in matters of Religion, very different and contrary. But God never left men without light, to diſcern of things that differ, and to deſcry the good, and the right way, if they had pleas'd to make uſe of it. The Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *There muſt be Hereſies, or Sects*, and gives a good reaſon for it, as our Saviour ſaith, *It muſt needs be, that offences come*, *Mat.* 18. 7. Yet no man hath any cauſe to complain, and ſay, We cannot ſee Act. 14. 16.

which is the right way, becauſe of thoſe Hereſies and Offences. God by them puts us to uſe our beſt skill and endeavours, for finding out the good, and the right way; and by thoſe differences makes appear, who are ſincere and ſound at heart. For ſuch there were, notwithſtanding thoſe differences, and ſuch there are, and will be to the Worlds end. Hence nothing can be ſpoken more frivolous, than to ſay, There are ſo many Religions, a man cannot tell which to chuſe. It is all one, as for a man to ſay, There are ſo many lanes and turnings in his way to ſuch a place, as he will never think of going thither, though his whole Eſtate be in hazard, and no way to help it, but by ſuch a journey. What do men, when they are bound to travel, but reſolve to goe on, and make the beſt enquiry they can to find out the way? And ſo ſhould we in this caſe; and to be otherwiſe minded, is a very madneſs.

2*dly*. The way to Heaven is not ſo hard to be found, if we had hearts reſolved to walk in it. There's a great fallacy in the Argument, which had need be diſcovered. For in truth, men deceive themſelves by it, whiles they conſider not, that their hearts are naturally at enmity with God, and his wayes; and becauſe they have no mind to goe where God commands and ſends them, they frame an excuſe, and pretend there are ſo many wayes, as 'tis impoſſible to find the right. And to ſpeak as it is, this is all the cauſe, and here lies all the fault. If men were willing to goe in Gods wayes, they would never com-

plain ſo much, of the difficulty in finding them. Tis an eaſie matter to find an excuſe, when a man wants a good will to any thing, whatever it be. *A Lion is in all wayes, where the ſlothful man is to goe.* Pro. 26. 13.

3*dly*. And for this purpoſe conſider farther, That the way to Heaven muſt be diſcern'd and diſcover'd, by that which is the proper mark and character of it, as we find it in Scripture. Now, in the matters of Gods Kingdom, ſome are more eſſential, ſubſtantial, and of greater conſequence, than others; ſo as they who differ about ſome particulars, may yet be right in the main, and all in Heavens way. 'Twere ſad indeed, if every difference in a punctilio, ſhould make another way to Heaven. Where are there two men in all the World, that are of one mind in every thing? God forbid, that among the different perſwaſions, that are about ſome things, in the way of adminiſtring Chriſts Ordinances, we ſhould allow of none to be in the way to Heaven, that is otherwiſe minded in ſome Particulars, than we our ſelves are. There are many roads to a great City, and yet they that goe the one, or the other, come alike to it, becauſe all thoſe ſeveral wayes have a tendency towards it. All the queſtion is, and muſt be, Whether the way we take, be ſuch, as hath a tendency towards Heaven? And by the way, I think it the great miſtake of ſome, to value men moſtly, according as they are affected to their own private way, whatever it be; whereas the valuation ought to be according to what men are in the main

main and great matters of Godlineſs, *viz.* Faith, Hope, Love, and all the fruits of them, Righteouſneſs, Mercy, *&c.* *For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men*, Ro. 14. 18. There are ſome Foundation-truths of the Goſpel, wherein to miſtake deliberately and conſtantly, is of deſperate conſequence. And there are the great matters of the Law, wherein a willful conſtant neglect is inconſiſtent with true Holineſs. Yea, though the errour or evil be in it ſelf none of the greateſt, yet when there is a perſiſting in them, after conviction, and againſt admonition, out of malignancy, I know not what to reſolve better, than that the way of ſuch men is not ſafe. But when there is an unfeigned deſire, and an earneſt endeavour, to know the good and right way, and a conſtant courſe in the practice of all ſervices and duties to God and men, with a conſcionable carefulneſs to avoid offence towards all, I know no reaſon, why ſuch, though under different perſwaſions, in ſome Particulars of no great concernment, ſhould be otherwiſe looked on, than as the Children of our Father in Heaven.

Therefore, as for the different perſwaſions of ſo many divided about ſome things, for want of light, they need be no occaſion of ſtumbling to any. The way to Heaven is eaſie to be ſeen, notwithſtanding thoſe differences. For whoever they be among thoſe Parties, that, in obedience to Chriſt, have learn'd to deny themſelves, and all ungodlineſs, *&c.* and to take up Chriſts Croſs, and to live in the conſtant exerciſe of mortifica-

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tion, and crucifying the flesh, and do indeed lead their lives, in the main, according to the only rule of righteousness, they are in Heavens way. Thou, it may be, dost not like the perswasions of some of them: And I say, If thou lik'st them not, for me thou mayest let them alone. But thou perhaps likest not Holiness, self-denial, and crucifying of thy Lusts neither; but art resolved to take thy full swinge in the pleasures of sin, and thy daily practice is, to serve thy fleshly desires to the utmost. Thou art (may be) a Drunkard, a common Swearer, an unclean Beast, living, lying down, and wallowing in the mire. Now to thee, I say, Whoever be in Heavens way, (to be sure) thou art out of it. And thou must certainly resolve, to change thy way, or perish for ever. Thou sayest, There are so many Religions, a man cannot tell which to chuse. But in the mean time, thou art of no Religion, thou hast not so much as a form and face of it. Set aside thy going to Church on *Sundayes*, (with what mind, thou thy self best knowest) what is there of Religion to be seen in thee? In thy Family, there is no shew of it, in Prayer, and Praise, and reading the Scripture, and Catechizing thy Children and Servants. There is to be seen all the Week, labouring for the food that perisheth, by early rising, and late going to bed. There a man may hear Oaths, and Curses, and Lyes, and filthy Communication, and the best but vain and idle discourses, but not a savory word, to shew any sense of God, and his goodness, from morning to night. There's Provision for the necessities

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of Nature, to cloath the back, and fill the belly; and Proviſion too for the fleſh, to fullfil the luſts thereof: But there's nothing of God and Godlineſs to be ſeen, no conſcience made of ſin to ſhun it, or of any thing that's good to practice it. Now, whoever thou art, that leadeſt ſuch a life, I tell thee, Whatever becomes of others, it cannot be well with thee in theſe wayes of ungodlineſs. Thou vain fooliſh man, thinkeſt thou, that any Religion can be worſe than thine? Thou haſt none at all, no not ſo much as a ſhew of it. Even *Turks* and *Pagans* may be, and ſome of them are, ſober, temperate, juſt, and honeſt in their doings and dealings with others, which thou art not. Wherefore, let there be never ſo many Religions, I'le rather chuſe the worſt of them, than to do as thou doſt. And this I aſſure thee, Whatever becomes of thoſe many Sects and Parties, thou art in a ſad condition, and hadſt need think of changing it, as ſoon as thou canſt. And if thou ask, Which way thou ſhalt take among ſo many, I anſwer thus, That I will not perſwade thee any way, but what (I am ſure) is right, *viz.* To be honeſt and godly, and to forſake thoſe wayes, wherein, whoever walks, ſhall never find reſt. *To follow peace and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* To repent of all thy ungodly courſes, and wayes of wickedneſs, whether open or ſecret. To walk circumſpectly, and make ſtraight ſteps to thy feet. To be holy and unblameable in all converſation, and to make conſcience of every duty, according to the rule of the Word. And this thou mayeſt do, without much adoe

Heb. 12. 14.

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or diſpute, except it be with thine own wicked heart.

For thoſe many Parties that are, I am bold to tell them all, and every one of them, That they will find no comfort one day, in being of this ſide, or that, if they be not found in wayes of righteouſneſs and holineſs. And theſe are the wayes I would have thee take, and theſe thou mayeſt ſoon learn from Scripture, where they are ſo plain, as a man may run, and read them. But one thing I muſt mind thee of again, *viz.* That thou who ſo quarrell'ſt at the many Religions abroad, haſt perhaps a quarrel in thy heart againſt God and Godlineſs, and thou canſt not endure any Religion ſo, as to be tyed to any Rule or Law, more than thine own Luſts. Thou loveſt to live at eaſe and pleaſure, and likeſt no Religion, but ſuch a one, as will give thee leave to be licentious. To thee I ſay again, dipp and chuſe, thou canſt never change thy Religion for a worſe. And to change it, thou haſt need, as ſoon as may be: For 'twill be ſad with thee, to dye in ſuch a Religion, which is indeed none at all, or good for nothing. Do not thou look, how many Religions and Opinions there are, for that's nothing to thee: But look to thy converſation, and ſee, whether that be ſuch as becomes a Chriſtian. Do thou love Chriſt, and fear to ſin, as much as any of all thoſe different perſwaſions; and ſhew thy ſelf as humble, as honeſt, as upright, as conſcionable, and every way as carefull to pleaſe God, as any of them all, and then thou doſt well indeed. Alas! poor Soul, what will it avail thee, to ſay, There are ſo many

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Religions, thou knoweſt not which to take, ſo long as thou art reſolved to walk in wayes of ungodlineſs, and to ſerve divers luſts and pleaſures, and deny thy ſelf in nothing, that will ſerve to pleaſe the fleſh. This, to be ſure, is not Heavens way, whatever it be. And therefore make no more queſtion, about the many Religions, that are in the World, till thou art better reſolved for that Religion, which is plain and eaſie enough to be learn'd by any, that hath not a wicked heart againſt God, and all that is good. Reſolve once to ſerve Sin no more, and thou wilt preſently ſee the way to Heaven, as plain before thee, as thou knoweſt the way to thine own houſe or home.

AND now I ſhall make ſome Application of all that hath been ſaid, after I have given one Proviſo, to prevent a miſtake that may be. I have hitherto ſhewed, How willful the wicked World is, and how apt to take offence, even to contend with God himſelf, about the wayes and workings of his Grace and Providence. Say and do what you can or will, they will not be perſwaded, but perhaps the more hardned. But though it be ſo with moſt of the World, yet beware, whatever you do, you give them no occaſion of falling or ſtumbling. Say not in thine heart, *They are ſuch as will periſh, and it matters not, how we carry our ſelves towards them, if they will be offended, let them be offended, we cannot help it.* Some, yea too many, will be offended,

fended; yet take heed of giving them the least occasion of offence: For so hath the Lord commanded, *Levit.* 19. 14. *Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God.* Yea, *Deut.* 27. 18. *There is a curse upon him, that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.* And our Saviour *denounceth a woe to him, by whom the offence cometh,* Mat. 18. 7. They are blind, and out of the way; but in that, they deserve the rather, to be the object of thy pity, and prayers, and endeavours, to turn them from the errour of their way. What knowest thou, that they may not recover themselves, and come to repentance? *Secret things belong to the Lord, Deut.* 29. 29. That we are to labour their repentance, and by all possible means to endeavour it, in our capacities and relations, is revealed to us as our duty; and if they will perish notwithstanding, we have delivered our own Souls, their blood will be upon their own heads. Our Saviour indeed said of some, *Let them alone,* &c. *Mat.* 15. 14. *i. e.* Have no regard to them, trouble not your selves about them, if they be offended, be not you offended however, because of them. But he allows not his Disciples to offend them in the least. If men shew themselves contentious, malicious, and wilfully contumacious, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, some of them were, Let them alone, pass them by, but yet provoke them not to be more wicked than they are. True, we cannot do what is our duty, but some will be offended, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were at Christ, for doing the will of him that sent him. But the offence

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was only taken by them, there was none given by him. He prov'd to be by accident a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, but never offended any. If we cannot do, what is our duty, without offence to ſome, the fault is theirs, not ours, becauſe we may not, to pleaſe them, offend God, by diſobeying his commands. Some will be offended, if we will not pledge them in a drunken health: Let them be offended, it need not trouble us. If we tamely do, as they do, we encourage them in their debaucheries, and ſo we offend them indeed, by helping them on towards the pit of deſtruction. Wicked men make too much haſt to the Devil, we need not provoke, or put them forward. Indeed we have need be very careful, and as the Apoſtle, *Jude v.* 22. adviſeth, *To put a difference.* Some perhaps will rage, if we will not run to the ſame exceſs of riot with them: But better they rage, than we, by doing what they would have us, to provoke Gods wrath againſt our own Souls. A patient forbearance to do, as they do, and a with-drawing from them, may be an effectual reproof, and work upon them afterwards. If there be no hope to faſten an admonition, *Solomon* hath reſolv'd the caſe for us, *Pro.* 9. 8. *Reprove not a Scorner.* However comply not with him, to allow of his wickedneſs in the leaſt. But be ſure, not to give any occaſion of falling to ſuch as are weak, *Leſt thy poor Brother periſh, for whom Chriſt dyed,* Ro. 14. 15. The Apoſtle was a ſingular precedent for this, *He would eat no fleſh whiles he lived, rather than offend his Brother,* 1 *Cor.* 8. *fin.* How did he yield upon occaſion,

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to avoid offence to the weak? But as farr as I can remember, not otherwise. He yielded in those things, wherein he was fully satisfied in his own conscience and judgement. But how, and upon what terms? Never (as I remember) but to prevent the offence, that might be taken by weak Brethren; lest they might take occasion, by his not yielding in some things, to cast off all, and turn back again with the Dogg to his vomit. We do not read of his so yielding to wicked willful Sinners, that would have made no other use of it, than to reproach him, and (which is worse) the Gospel too, by saying, he was a man of no Principles, that would comply with any thing, to save his skin. We have a notable Instance for this in *Galat.* 2. 3, 4, 5. *when false Brethren went about to infringe the liberty of Christians, and bring them into bondage, he gave no place by subjection, no not for an hour.* for therein he had built again the things that he had destroyed, and encouraged the enemies of the truth in their opposition against it. Yield in any thing thou canst, to save a Soul, to draw men on to a good liking of Gods wayes, and putting them forward in them: But not one haits breadth, to encourage them in their ungodliness; For that's offending them, contrary to the command of Christ.

And now I must call loud upon many, and even conjure them, to consider their wayes, whereby they have given so great occasion of offence, to such as are openly and avowedly wicked. O! Do not say, or think, *Such ungodly men shew themselves, what they are; when*

they declare their sin as Sodom, *they are past shame, and past hope; Let them dye, and be damn'd, who can help it?* It may prove so, that they will dye, and be damn'd, and nor thou, nor any man else can help it, because they will not help themselves. But thou hast need look to it, that their death and condemnation add nothing to thine account. They perish for their contempt or neglect of that, which they should more carefully have look'd after: But what if your careless and loose walking, have been the occasion of making them to think, they need not be so carefull; yea, perhaps, of slighting and letting at nought all the wayes of Gods Commandments? Surely, if it be so, the best that can be made or said of it, is this, That they are Principals, and you are Accessaries, as to their destruction; and what comfort you can take in that, I beseech you seriously to consider. For be you well assured, that the ungodly lives of professed Christians, will one day be aggravated by this, that when they lived (as many thousands now do) amongst professed Infidels, they gave them occasion to have hard thoughts of Christ and Christianity, and to resolve, they would never goe to that Heaven, where Christians hope to come. For how shall such poor Souls be brought to enquire after God, when they that profess themselves to be his servants, walk ordinarily in wayes of uncleanness, excess and deceit, &c. such as Heathens know by Natures light, to be against the mind of God? The Devil himself (whom those *Barbarians* serve) can teach them no worse, than what they

they are learn'd by the evil converſations and examples of Chriſtians. How ſhall they be turned from the power of Satan unto God, when they cannot ſee it will be for the better, but rather for the worſe? Here I cannot omit, what the *Turks* are wont to ſay, when another will not believe them, *What doſt take me for a Chriſtian?* It ſeems they have obſerved too much falſhood amongſt Chriſtians. Now this is a Lamentation, and let it be a Lamentation, that the mouths of Infidels are ſo much opened againſt all Chriſtians, and the mouths alſo of many profeſſed Chriſtians againſt more eminent Profeſſors, to blaſpheme, and ſay, *Are theſe the wayes and doings of thoſe that ſerve Chriſt? Are theſe practices becoming them, that pretend ſo much to Godlineſs, and would be thought more excellent than their Neighbours?* What inference (think you) will Infidels, and ungodly prophane men make from it? Surely this, and no other, *Let them go alone for us, we are as well where we are already, we are not like to mend our ſelves, by taking the courſes and wayes of theſe Chriſtians, theſe grave Profeſſors; nor can we be worſe in the way wherein we now are: If they be not in all, as we are, they are certainly in ſome things as bad as we can be.* And now I could *extempore*, and without any ſtudy, draw up a black bed-roll of many and manifold groſs miſcarriages of many, that would be thought more eminent Chriſtians than their Neighbours. But I ſhall content my ſelf with this general Admonition, in hope it may be improved to the right end of it, by ſuch as cannot but know themſelves

faulty in many particulars, unleſs the God of this World hath quite blinded the eyes of their minds. O that theſe men would conſider as they ſhould, what to anſwer in the great day of account! Specially when it cannot be denied, that ſuch horrid things have been done, as Natures light (if there were no other evidence) cannot but condemn. I ſhall only add, They have been ſuch, as whoſoever (that is but civil and ſober) hears, his ears cannot but tingle at the very report of them.

The Application.

IF all the ground and reaſon of all miſtakes and miſcarriages about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and our Salvation, be our contempt or neglect of the means and helps which God hath allowed us, Let every one by himſelf, make a ſerious enquiry, how he ſhall be able to clear himſelf in the great day of account. For God will certainly come, and judge, and try every mans work, and reward accordingly.

And in this Application of the foregoing Diſcourſe, I ſhall apply my ſelf to all, and every one, that hath but ſo much of Religion, as to acknowledge, That there is a World to come, after a little time ſpent here on Earth, and that men ſhall be rewarded hereafter for ever, according to their preſent behaviour.

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This is no more of Religion, than all, or moſt of Heathens ever had, and ſtill have; though their conceptions about it, have been, and ſtill are, but confuſed, general, imperfect notions, without any effect conſiderable. But yet, the main intent of all, ſhall be with a more eſpecial reſpect to ſuch as do, or might know more clearly, the *things of their peace, than Heathens can.* To theſe I ſay, They cannot but know, that all who have lived ſince the World began, and ſhall live till it have an end, ſhall not be for ever as they were here on Earth. And this our Saviour ſhews plainly in the Parable (as I take it to be) of the Rich man and *Lazarus*, *Luc.* 16. *v.* 19.--31. Some receive their good things here, and ſome muſt wait for them till hereafter. And a great turn there will be, ſo as the Scene ſhall be quite changed, as you may ſee *v.* 25. of *Luc.* 16. *For* Lazarus *is comforted, and the Rich man is tormented.*

Now conſider what hath been diſcourſed before, and ſee whither you are a going, and where you make account to arrive at laſt. There is, by your own confeſſion, an happy eſtate and condition for ſome in glory, and honour, and immortality. And by what hath been ſaid before, you may ſee (if you will) that nor you, nor any others, lye under any fatal neceſſity of periſhing in your ſins; but that if you dye, and be damn'd, it is only through your own default. Now be intreated, whiles it is called, To day, to conſider your wayes, and bethink your ſelves, how thoſe bleſſed Souls, that have all their deſires and hopes accompliſhed in the ſight

of God for ever, came to the enjoyment of their happineſs. Was it not in the way of Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Did they know by immediate and extr ordinary Revelation, before they repented and believed, that they were of the number that ſhould be ſaved? Or was the Book of Life opened to them, that they might read their own names there recorded, and ſo be encouraged to repent, and turn to God? You cannot, when you are awake, imagine it; or if you ſhould, it is but as a ſick mans dream, that never entred into the head of one that's ſober, and in his right ſenſes. Alas! Thoſe now bleſſed Souls
Tit. 3. 3. were once (while upon earth) *Fooliſh and diſobedient, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures. They*
Eph. 2. 3. *were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* They were of themſelves inclin'd to the things of this World, and traded and traffiqu'd for them, as others do, till afterwards they came to know better. Yea, all that died in the faith, before God was manifeſted in the fleſh, and never had the diſcoveries of ſaving grace, ſuch as have been ſince, even they by dimmer light choſe the way to that place, where they ſhall be for ever with the Lord. And who among us now, would not deſire to be with thoſe Patriarchs, and Prophets, and other holy men of God before and ſince the coming of Chriſt? Now conſider well, whether we take the ſame courſe that they took. Read the Eleventh Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and ſee, what ſo many Worthies of old did and ſuffered, and ſo by faith and patience inherited the promiſes.

miſes. They ſtood not arguing and whartling, as many now do, putting queſtions, and framing exceptions, to excuſe themſelves from neceſſary duties, and to gain a little allowance to their fleſhly deſires. They were not frighted out of Gods way, by Bugg-bears of their own fancies, no nor by reall fears and expectations of the greateſt hazards. You never read in Scripture, that they made Queries about Gods Decrees; or reſolved, as ſome do, that if they were elected, they ſhould be ſaved however; or that, if Chriſt died not for them, there was no hope. You never read, that any of thoſe, who are now in Heaven, reaſoned thus, That they could do nothing of themſelves, and therefore would ſit ſtill, and faſhion themſelves to this World, becauſe if God had any grace or mercy in ſtore for them, they ſhould be ſure to have it in his time, though they never ſought after it. Did any of them do thus, and let all the care of their Salvation lie ſomewhere elſe, without ever looking after it? Where do you read theſe things, or who told you ſo, that others may learn and know as much as you? I have read much of their faith and patience, and patient continuance in well-doing; and how by theſe they poſſeſſed the Kingdom, prepared for them, through the grace of him that is Heir of all things: But amongſt them all, I read not of one, that took the courſe, that ſo many do now adayes. They were all of them humble Souls, ſubmiſſive in all things to the wills of God, and reſolv'd to walk with God, in the midſt of all the ungodly ones amongſt whom they liv'd. They denied

themſelves, many of them, to the very death, and took joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods, and would not renounce the wayes of God, for all that a wicked World could do unto them, or lay upon them. This (I ſay) this was the way, wherein they went to Heaven; and they that know of any other way thither, than that of Self-denial, and crucifying the fleſh, with the affections and luſts, have made a diſcovery, ſuch as none, who are now in Heaven, could make before them. What remains then, but that we tread in their ſteps, do and ſuffer as they did, if we are call'd to it, and ſo wait for our happineſs, and try, if we fare not as well as others that went before us. 'Tis ſad to think, how moſt men fool themſelves out of all their hopes, by their dallying about their greateſt and only concernments, and flatter themſelves to their deſtruction, by conceits and fancies of their own framing. The way to Heaven is now as open, as ever it ſhall be, till Chriſts coming again; and the Doctrine of our Salvation, is much cleared up, in all particulars, as nothing can ſtumble us, if we will but lay aſide our peeviſh and froward humours. Were we but once reſolved to deny our ſelves, and to follow Chriſt where-ever he goes before us, whatever the way be, fair or foul, the work is done, we need make no other queſtion: There's as good ſecurity, as can be given, and we may ſafely build upon it.

But alas! It is not ſo with us, as it was with the Saints, who are now in Heaven. We ſtand bleſſing our ſelves in our own way, be it never ſo bad;

bad; and think we do well in all we do, though all Scripture and Reaſon be againſt it. This is the trade that Sinners drive, as the Devil would have them, and their own hearts incline and carry them. The Devil (you muſt know) ever ſince he undid himſelf, hath made it his buſineſs to undoe all the World of mankind, as much as in him lieth. And he is now as hard at work as ever he was, and drives as great a trade, for gaining Souls to himſelf, as ever he did. And what is his way, to cheat the World, and gull men of all they have, worth ſaving or loſing? Truly, the very ſame, or very like to that, which I have before diſcourſed. He cannot by all the arts and methods he uſeth, heighten mens ſinfull corruption to the ſame degree of malice and madneſs againſt God, that himſelf is guilty of. But yet he hath a way that ſerves his turn, to bring men into the ſame place of torment with himſelf for ever. And what way is it? It is even this, and no other, *viz.* To keep men in a perſwaſion, that their way is good, and that they have no ſuch enmity in their hearts againſt God, as ſome charge them with; but that they love him, and all his Commandments truly, and do the beſt they can, to chuſe the beſt way to their everlaſting happineſs. And theſe conceits are ſtrong in thoſe that have them, ſo as it is no eaſie matter to convince them of the contrary. Theſe they nouriſh and cheriſh, even when they are in wayes of all ungodlineſs, running headlong to their own deſtruction.

Now my deſire is, to reaſon the caſe a little further with theſe men, and try, if God may

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be pleased to give them Repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil.

1. And First, I ask them, If *Turks*, and Infidel-*Jews*, are not as much perswaded, that their several respective wayes are good, yea, and better than any other? Yea, do not all men, of what Sort and Sect soever, though never so vile, and vicious, and barbarous, perswade themselves, that their way is good? Can you light on Man, Woman, or Child, that will not say, They hope to be saved; and the way they take (whatever it be) is, as they think, the ready way to Heaven? Nay, if you tell them, they are in the broad way towards Hell, will they not be ready to flie in your face, and say, You do them wrong? Yet no sober man will say, That all and every one of these is in the right, but many of them (whoever they be) are quite beside the way to Heaven.

2. I ask, If any of all those Persons and Parties (which are numerous and various) do not so farr allow of their own respective wayes, as to abhorr the different wayes that others take, and count them accursed of God for abusing themselves in their mistaken wayes, as to undoe their Souls for ever? Do not *Turks* and *Jews* condemn all Christians to the Pit of Hell? And I know but few others, that are better minded towards all, that are not of their own way. Papists say for certain, There's no Salvation for any out of their Church. And the vilest of men amongst us, spare not to pass sentence upon others, that dare not be so vile as themselves.

Now

Now when God ſhall come to judge all, will he (think you) allow of every plea, that ſhall be made by every one of theſe, and ſay, Well done, You are all my faithfull Servants? Will he commend and reward all, according as they all perſwaded themſelves, that their way was good? No certainly, he will not ſo acquit the wicked World, that condemn all beſides themſelves, and their followers. Nor will he count, that every man hath a right to eternal life, of what Religion ſoever he is, (as ſome have dream'd) becauſe he ſeem'd to mean well in it. The Lord hath ſhewed all men, what is good, and what he requireth of them, and that ſo fully and plainly, as he will have ground enough to proceed againſt them, and to execute vengeance on all Idolaters, and all other ungodly and unrighteous men, whatſoever Religion they profeſſed. He will eaſily and ſuddenly find out all, that have enquir'd and ſought after the only true way of worſhip, which himſelf had appointed, and have made conſcience of walking before him in holineſs and righteouſneſs, with an utter abhorring of all falſe wayes. And to theſe only will he ſay, Well done, good and faithfull Servants, You, and you only, have done as I commanded you.

If any ſhall ſay, That an allowance muſt be given to ſome, becauſe all that goe in the good way, walk not at one rate, but ſome come behind and faulter ſometimes: I ſay ſo too, and that the righteous God will put a difference between thoſe that are upright in the main, though falling behind others in degrees of true grace, & others, that wilfully chuſe their own wayes, which God

hath

hath expresly forbidden, and as wilfully refus'd the good old way of Gods Commandments. He knows, and will own all, that have denied themselves, and made it their work to find and keep the way of God. There are, and alwayes have been such in the World, (though a few in comparison) that knew the streight way to Heaven, amongst all the crooked wayes of mens devising, and set themselves to keep that way, notwithstanding all opposition or temptation. And these only will God look after in the great day of account. For others, he will have enough to answer them, though they were of never so many and different perswasions, in point of Religion, they must be all pack'd together in that day, and bound in bundles, to be cast into the fire, because they were all in their life time, Workers of iniquity. They shall prevail little by pleading then, They could never see reason enough to perswade them out of the way that they took. For they shall be made to see in that day, there was a right and good way of holiness and righteousness, wherein they should have walked, (and it was easie enough to be seen) but they would not walk therein. Nay, they found fault with it, and rais'd false reports of it, and us'd all the Arguments they could, to keep themselves and others from walking in it. They would never stoop their high Spirits, to enter into the strait gate, nor would they bear the contempt of the World, and the reproach that must be undergone for Christs sake, and the Gospels. They thought, to be religious, was to be melancholick; and thought it an hard bargain, to part with

ith the pleaſures of ſin, for ſomewhat (that me crack-brain'd people talk'd much of) in nother World to be had, but no man knew hen or where. They were ſuch, as would be erry while they might, and take as much of is World as they could; and for Religion, in reect to another World, they could never well nderſtand it. There were indeed ſome, that lk'd much that way, but they could not well gree among themſelves, and therefore they ft them to quarrel about it, and took the way hat themſelves beſt liked. For the Religion hich ſome cried up, as the only way to Heaven, they conceiv'd it very ſtrait and narrow; nor could they ſee ſo much in it, as might perſwade them to it. In a word, they never liked ny Religion, that would tie them to deny all ngodlineſs, and worldly luſts. And hence it is aſie to conceive, how God will proceed againſt ll Sects and Sorts of men, of what perſwaſion ſoever, that never were perſwaded to deny themſelves for God, and the Goſpels ſake.

It ſhould be alſo conſidered, That, though ll men have not Talents alike (as that may be ranted) either for weight or number, yet all ave enough, to ſhew them a better way, than what the moſt take, and that their way is not good before the Lord. Hence it will be clear, That there hath been a wilfull neglect of the truſt that was committed to them, and ſo without further evidence, the verdict will paſs againſt them. They all know (though not all alike) their Maſters will, and yet do it not, and therefore muſt be all beaten, though not with

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the ſame number or meaſure of ſtripes. This the Devil knows well enough, and that no plea (ſuch as men frame many to themſelves now) will then find place. And therefore, his work is to blind-fold men with ſuch conceits as were mention'd before, and ſo fill them with as many prejudices againſt God, and his wayes, as they can poſſibly hold, that when they are hood-wink'd, he may carry them whither he pleaſeth. Men are not eaſily (if poſſibly) brought to deſpite God as the Devil doth: Therefore they muſt be deal with ſo, as to be perſwaded, there is ſome cauſe without them, and without any fault of theirs, which puts them upon thoſe vain and vile wayes and courſes wherein they walk. What thoſe pretences are, you have heard before, and I need not repeat them. Only I ſay, That ſo long as the Devil can hold men under ſuch miſtakes and prejudices, or the like, he hath them faſt enough, and doth not fear an eſcape. Men, I ſay, will have excuſes for the worſt of their evil wayes, and this is one, and a great one, That the way they are in, is the beſt they can ſee; and they could never meet with any, that could ſhew them a better. They are willing enough to ſave their Souls, and have done as much as lieth in them for that end. They love God heartily, and abhorr, that any ſhould ſay, They hate his Commandments, which they labour to keep as well as they can. And all this ſerves to clear themſelves, and caſt all upon God: But he will not bear all, that men caſt upon him; nor will he ſay in the great day of account, *Alas! poor Souls, you were willing enough to be ſaved,*

you

loved me, and my wayes well enough, and would have walked in them, if I had tendred your Souls, as much as you your ſelves did. Will the Lord (think you) at that day, take upon himſelf all the blood of ſo many, as ſhall then be condemned to Hell for ever, and ſay, *If I had done for theſe, as I might, and ought to have done, they had never come into this place of torment?* Will the Lord ſay, *That he made men as he pleaſed, and then caſt them away, and left them to ſuffer ſhame and confuſion of face, for no fault of theirs, but only becauſe he had a mind to ſee his Creatures ſlain, and tormented before him for ever?* Will he ſay, *It was in his heart to damn them before they were born, and that for nothing, but becauſe it was his will and pleaſure? And that he ſent his Son into the World, to condemn the World, and not that the World through him might be ſaved?* Will he ſay indeed, *That he ſet men in ſuch a way, as they could not but periſh in it, and left them wholly depriv'd and deſtitute of all means and helps to ſave themſelves from Wrath to come?* Conſider, I ſay, and bethink your ſelves before-hand, Whether the righteous God will take home all this to himſelf, and ſay, *It was he alone that hath been the cauſe of all the ruine and miſery that is come upon his Creatures*; and ſo quit them from any the leaſt blame of their deſtruction. Yet this is it, or very like it, that men would faſten upon God, if they knew how to do it. This is the tendency of all their diſputes about Gods Decrees and Diſpenſations of Grace and Providence. It is this, and no other, even to charge it on God, That if he had

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purposed and provided better for them, it had never been so sad with them, but they might have been happy and blessed for ever. But let God alone, and it will appear one day, where the fault lieth. He is the Judge of all the Earth, and will not he do right? Yes, he will do right to all; and this the Apostle layeth down, as an unmoveable Principle, *Ro.* 3. 5, 6. *God is not unrighteous, who taketh vengeance. For then how shall God judge the World?* He will then acquit himself, and say for ever, *These are the work of my hands, and I made them so, as they might have been happy for ever in communion with myself. I allowed them means sufficient for that end, but they cast me off, and chose somewhat else to be their only good; and though I have besought and intreated them, again and again, with all possible earnestness, and admonished them of the danger of their own wayes, they would goe on however, and their frowardness and wilfullness in their own vices, against my express command to the contrary, hath brought them to this, which they now see and feel, but would never believe till now. I have passed the sentence of condemnation upon them, and it cannot be recall'd, nor can there be any reprieve or respite. But I have not done it without cause, and only for that I had a mind to see them lye for ever in torments and misery. It was indeed my will to damn them, but I will'd their damnation only for their sin, and because they would not be reclaimed. I delighted not in their damnation, so as to condemn them, meerly for my will and pleasure. I have only done justice upon incorrigible Offendors, such as have despised my grace and mercy*

Gen. 18. 25.

mercy, and the reward of these wicked ones is according to their works, yea as they would have it. For I fore-warn'd them of it, as often and as earnestly as needed, and they would not beware; nor could any intreaties prevail, to turn them from those ungodly wayes, which led them to their destruction, as they knew.

Let men say now as they please, This is that which God will say, to justifie himself against all the World. And O! that men were wise, to consider it in time, and apply themselves to make their peace with God, which I assure them they may do, if they be not wanting to themselves.

And for their encouragement; I shall give them the best account I am able, how, and in what manner, God will proceed in the last and general Judgement. The way that he will take in that day, will be this, That every man shall be tried according to a known Law. 'Tis a gross mistake in men, to imagine, That God will judge the World according to that, which was never made known. The question will not be, Whether a mans Name were written in the Book of Life, but how he hath behaved himself, according to the Rule laid down in the Bible. That is more particularly and plainly thus, Whether, when Christ was offered to them, they accepted of him, and closed with him upon his own terms. For as they have answered the dispensations and overtures of his grace, so shall their doom be. If they counted all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him; and valued nothing else in comparison, so they might

serve and honour him, whether by doing or suf-
Ro. 2. 7. fering, in life or in death, *Peace, and Life, and*
Luc 22. *Glory, and Immortality, will be their portion,*
28, 29. *and the lot of their inheritance for ever.* The
Cause will for certain goe on their side, for the
mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But if they
have been contentious, and disobedient, and
Ro. 2. 8, 9. would not have the Lord Christ to reign over
2 Thes. 1. them, but would walk after their ungodly lusts,
7, 8. whatever could be said or done to reform them,
there's a declared Law to condemn them; God
will not, needs not look into any other Records
about it.

Obj. If any say, That all shall not be judged by the Gospel;

Sol. I shall not contend, but only say, That all shall be condemned by a known Law, one or other.

Ro. 2. 11, 12. And if it be said further, *That as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*: I answer,

That the Apostle shews what he means in the 14*th.* Verse of the same Chapter. They that sin, and shall be condemned without Law, are the *Gentiles*, who had not the Law delivered to them (as the *Jews* had it) in writing: But yet they had the Law written in their hearts, and that will be plain enough, because it bare witness, and accus'd them, while they were in their sins. And this we may well inferr from that place, That if there be a Law, that condemns men now in this World, by witnessing against their wickedness, much more will there be a Law found, for their condemnation, in the last day

day of account. Or this, That the same Law that condemns them now, will certainly condemn them then. And let that be observ'd also, That as Sin is the transgression of the Law, so Condemnation for Sin cannot be otherwise, than according to that Law. Once, it cannot be according to that which never was a Law; and that cannot be a Law, which was never declar'd to be a Rule of Life and Duty. Gods Decrees and Counsels are all righteous, but they were never made known to us, as a rule of moral actings. When God is pleased to declare his counsel by the event, we cannot without sin goe against it, and it is impossible for us to alter it. But still the rule we are to walk by, is the will of God, reveal'd for that end and purpose, that we may know what to do, in obedience to him who is our Soveraign Lord. And as we do, or do not, according to this will of God, so we are guilty or innocent before him. And good reason why it should be so, and not otherwise. For,

1. How can we be obedient to God in any thing, but that which we know to be his will? Obedience in the very notion of it, imports as much as hearing and understanding what the will of the Lord is. Nor will the righteous Lord of all, expect obedience to any will of his, we never heard of. Sure we are, that he never declared to the Sons of men any way of life, but in the two Covenants, *viz.* of Works before the fall, and of Grace ever since. And though the means and manner of imparting to men the way of life, have been various; yet no man can, or

could ever say, That God had conceal'd his mind from him, that he could not know, and so do it. We read, That there are Decrees and Counsels of God: But who knows, what they are, besides God himself, till he is pleas'd to declare them, in the events of them? And those events shew us only, what God will do, and not what we are to do.

2. We shew no Faith in God otherwise, than in obedience to his Commandments. This is the only way of *walking with God*, as Noah, *Gen.* 6. 9. When a man hath the Promise of God in his eye, and the Commands of God in his heart, and the encouragements he hath by the one, lays an obligation and engagement to the other. So did all those Worthies, *Heb.* 11. who are recorded for example, to all that shall come after. The believing of the Promises, and obedience to the Commands of God, are the triall of men on Earth, and that by which they shall be tried hereafter. He that hath not Faith, cannot forgoe what is in hand, to purchase a reversion of he knoweth not what. *Faith alone is the ground of things hoped for*, &c. *Heb.* 11. 1. And so it sets a man on work to do and suffer the will of God, because it assures a man of Gods Faithfulness and All-sufficiency. This obedience of Faith is that, which God rewards in his Servants, and nothing else. This is that which (as I may say) takes much with God, when men can pass by present enjoyments, only because of his promise

Heb. 6. 10. *Who cannot forget any work, or labour of love which they have shewed unto his Name.*

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3. A man ſhews no Love to God, in doing according to his decree and counſel, becauſe he cannot but do it, whether he will or no. Now God rewards no work, but the labour of love, when we delight to do his will, *Pſa.* 48. and deſire the knowledge of his wayes, as *David* did, *Pſa.* 119. that we may walk in them.

4. The Devil, and the worſt of wicked men, fullfil the counſels of God, in all they do, and cannot do otherwiſe. *Herod* and *Pilate*, *&c.* in crucifying Chriſt, did nothing, but what the hand and counſel of God had determined before, *Act.* 2. 23. *Act.* 4. 28. and yet it was their ſin, and their condemnation too. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* is commended, *for a good man, and a juſt*, Luc. 23. 50, 51. *becauſe he conſented not to the counſel and deed of them*, who crucified Chriſt. The way of Gods Commandments, is the only way to life, and this the Devil and his followers cannot abide to walk in. For the way of his Counſels, they are alwayes in it, and cannot go beſides it, even when they do their worſt. And indeed, how ſhould they? unleſs we will ſuppoſe (what is not to be imagin'd) That God ſhould lay by all care, and looking after the affairs of the World, and leave them to be managed and ordered, as the Devil, and his Inſtruments will have them.

To ſay no more of this; God hath laid before us the way of Faith and Obedience, or the way of Truth and Holineſs, and commanded it, as the way that leadeth unto life; and in this way alone, can we find reſt unto our Souls.

Away therefore with all disputes and questions about Gods Decrees in this case, as being no rule for us to walk by: And look only, what God hath commanded, and be carefull about that, and you need not fear, it will be well with you for ever. *The whole course and tenour of Scripture speaks this, if it say any thing about the things of God, or the concernments of mens Souls.*

Secondly, Considering the Premises, we have occasion to enquire, and search diligently, till we come at the root of all our sinfull mistakes and miscarriages. And here I shall First admonish you of that, which most are not aware of: And Secondly, I shall advise, what is best to be done about it.

First, Whereas there is such an aptness and inclination in all to excuse and put off all from themselves, yea, and to put upon God himself, as much as in them lieth, the sin and misery which they alone have procur'd; I cannot forbear to fore-warn all of that accursed bad humour, which hath no other rise or root than Ignorance, and want of acquaintance with themselves. This, and nothing else, causeth them to quarrel, and pick occasions of so doing, with God, and his wayes of Grace and Providence, and any thing, but that which alone is in the fault. Poor Souls, ever since the old Serpent dropt his poyson into them, are infected with the same disease that the Devil is sick of. And what is that? Even all the sinfull corruption, that he contracted to himself,

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by his rebellion against God. His fall began in his pride, and that pride abides upon him, as our saying is, *As proud as the Devil.* Certainly Man, since his fall, is extreamly proud and conceited of himself, though there be no cause for it, and cannot abide to be thought, what indeed he is. And yet he is but a proud fool, that thinks himself somewhat, when he is indeed nothing, or that which is worse. And this proud fool stayes not at home, but is alwayes abroad, looking to what others do, and living in a gross mistake of himself, and all his wayes. He thinks little of that inbred corruption, which hath leaven'd the whole lump of his nature, both in soul and body. He is asleep, and dreams of a good nature, and of an honest heart towards God, and a good desire after the things that concern his Salvation. He cannot believe himself to be an enemy to God, and his own Soul, and that he was born so. Farr be it from him (he thinks) to be such a one, as procures and works out his own damnation, and is willing to think of nothing else. Yea, this proud fool will be very pettish, if he be told, that the best part about him, *is enmity against God*; and that he hates the wayes of Gods Commandments, and therein shews, that he loves death. But whatever he thinks, and will not believe it, all this is true; and that which he believes of himself, is a very falsity and lye. And being a fool, he doth as a fool, and no instruction or correction will put him out of his foolish conceits. Truly in this, the misery of sinfull man is great upon him, *viz.* He never looks inward or homeward, to con-

1 Tim. 3. 6.

Ro. 8. 7.

ſider how it is with him, notwithſtanding there are ſo many witneſſes againſt him, of his folly and madneſs.

1. Scripture is large and plentiful in ſetting out the corruption of mans heart and nature. If I ſhould mention particular Texts, I ſhould abuſe the Reader, who cannot but know them. But if any deſire to peruſe any of them, let them turn to *Gen.* 6. 5. *Ro.* 3. 10. *&c. Eph.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *Tit.* 3. 3. *&c.*

2. Woſull Experience (if there were no more) is enough to convince men, if they would but ſit down, and conſider, how it is with them. What ſober man can doubt of it, when he cannot but ſee, that he is much inclin'd to the Earth, the World, and the Fleſh, and ſo averſe from, yea and contrary to the things that concern his Soul? Doth not every man find it ſo, or might he not, if he would? I wiſh men would but queſtion themſelves ſometimes about ſuch matters, and ſay to their own Souls, *What ayles me? I can think and talk of this World, from morning to night, and never be weary, nay, I am alwayes ſo: And for Heaven, and the eſtate of my Soul, and how I ſhall do to Eternity, I never think, nor care to think of it.* If men (I ſay) would but ſit down ſometimes, and conſider, what they affect, and what they abhorr moſt, could they poſſibly be ignorant of the natural inclination that is in them to preſent things, with a neglect and loathing the matters of another World?

3. There is one thing more, that puts it beyond all diſpute or queſtion. How apt are all men, even from the Cradle, to cloſe with, and run

run after the toyes and vanities of this World? And how, without any teaching or prompting, they learn to do vainly and wickedly? They need not be learn'd to lye, and ſwear, and curſe, and ſpeak untoward things. And yet what adoe is there, to make them heed or learn any thing that good is? *Zophar* was right in what he ſaith. *Job* 11. 12. *Man is born a wild Aſſes Colt. An Aſſe, and a wild Aſſe, and the Colt of a wild Aſſe*: And all little enough, to ſet forth the deſperate bruitiſh perverſeneſs and blockiſhneſs of mans nature. The Apoſtle calls a natural mind, *not an enemy, but enmity it ſelf*, *Ro.* 8. 7. And ſo it is, whatever men may think. We are all born, as full of enmity againſt God, and all that concerns our everlaſting good, as we can poſſibly hold; and there is not one piece or particle of us, but is wholly depraved by that enmity.

Now man by Nature ſo fram'd, ſhews himſelf an Aſſes Colt, in his blockiſh brutiſh ignorance, and lamentable unacquaintedneſs with his own eſtate. There is ſomewhat, which the World calls Wiſdom, but it is indeed Folly. The ſound knowledge of God, and ones ſelf, is the only true wiſdom. Sure, whatever a man knows elſe, whiles he is ignorant of theſe, he knows nothing as he ought to know.

And ſince it is thus, we may ſoon diſcover, whence it comes, that men are ſo captious and quarrelſome, to catch at any thing, that may ſerve to excuſe themſelves, though it be with charging God fooliſhly and wickedly. When people are ſick and ſore, they will complain of their

their beds, and thoſe that attend them, and every thing about them, though 'tis their grief and diſeaſe within, that alone troubles them. So do men in their ſins, complain of every thing, but that which is indeed the only cauſe of all that ayles them.

And now the work that lieth upon us, is to get an inward ſively ſenſe and feeling of all thoſe diſorders and diſtempers of our own hearts and natures, that carry us on to all the wayes of our undoing. He that hath a due and right apprehenſion of his own condition, as it is by nature, will ſoon perceive, that he hath no cauſe to complain of any thing more, than his own wicked heart. But herein the Devil hath the advantage againſt poor Souls, that are already intangled in his ſnares, that he keeps them in a g zing poſture, to look on every thing without them, and ſo their eyes are held, as they ſee nothing of that which is the true cauſe both of their ſin and miſery. Now to ſuch I ſay, That our own hearts and natures, infected with the poyſon of the old Serpent, procure and cauſe to us all that we ſhall ſuffer for ever hereafter. The Devil tempts and enticeth us, and the World is an object, that occaſions our corrupt hearts to work and move diſorderly. But neither of theſe could hurt us, if it were not for our Fleſh, *i. e.* the Sin that dwelleth within us. But this we take no notice of, and ſo are out at firſt ſtep, and run on in miſtakes, till we come to charge God himſelf with our miſ arriages, rather than fail of an excuſe for our ſelves.

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If any ask, What is to be done in the case? The Answer is obvious, and at hand, and it is this, *viz.* That every man that wisheth well to himself, begin the work of his Salvation at home. I mean it thus, Let every man resolve, that he is of himself an enemy to God, and his own Soul, and inclin'd to nothing so much, as to his own utter undoing. For certain, such is every man by nature; and he that thinks otherwise, knows not himself, which to do is the beginning of wisdom. To know ones disease is the first step to health, and without it all medicines applyed are but arrowes shot at random, that seldom or never hit. The method of God, in turning a poor Sinner to himself, is first to open his eyes, and the first sight that such a Soul hath, is the sinfulness of his way, whence he comes to loath it, and can no longer abide in it. This discovery of sin to a Soul never stops, till it come to see all the sink and puddle, or (as I may call it) the Hell of corruption and filthiness that is in it, so as it cannot abide it self upon that account. And when any man comes once to such a discovery, then he finds so much at home, as he never complains of any but himself. He is so farr from charging God, as he takes no great notice of the Devil, but he falls foul only upon his own heart, and saith, That, and nothing else, hath undone him, as farr as he is undone; and if he could but obtain a better heart, the work of his Salvation would goe on as well as he could wish.

My Advice therefore in the case is this. O all you poor Souls, that are so unsatisfied about the matters

matters of your Salvation, as you are ready to call even God in queſtion, Goe home, and ſearch diligently, what you find in your own hearts. If you pleaſe once to do this to ſome purpoſe, I'le be your warrant for quarrelling and queſtioning the wayes of Gods Providence and Grace hence-forward. You will then be ready to juſtifie God, whatever he doth; and as ready to ſay, *'Tis I, 'tis I, and no other, that have brought my ſelf to this, that now I am; and if God leave me to ſuffer for ever, I have none to thank for it, but mine own wicked heart.* When men are (as too many) ignorant of the rule to try themſelves by, or elſe unwilling to ſearch and know their own eſtates, it is no marvel if they quarrel at others. But he that knows himſelf, as he ought to know, hath no quarrel in compariſon againſt any thing but himſelf.

This therefore is my Advice, That every poor Sinner fall to ſtudy himſelf, and never leave, till he apprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his natural ſin and corruption. And for all that undertake the charge of Souls, I believe it to be the firſt and main part of their work, to bring poor ſilly people to a true ſight and ſenſe of the badneſs and baſeneſs of their hearts and natures; and in order thereunto, to bring them to a right underſtanding of the Law, that diſcovers ſin, and worketh wrath; I mean, to underſtand it, in the ſpiritual ſenſe of it. As long as people think the Commandments are not broken, otherwiſe than in overt acts of cruelty, uncleanneſs, deceit, *&c.* 'tis no marvel if they pleaſe themſelves in a Phariſaical righteouſneſs.

A right understanding of the Commandments, in the spiritual sense of them, will lay open many evils, that otherwise men are not aware of; and lead them on to see the root of bitterness, that bears all those cursed fruits. As long as people are perswaded they are born Christians, so as to need no conversion, but only goe on in an outside profession of that Religion, which they never chose for themselves, but was chosen to their hands, it's no marvel if they are pleas'd with their condition, and look no further. But they should be made to know, That the Children of Christians, notwithstanding the priviledge of the Covenant, are by nature, and of themselves, the Children of wrath, and born in sin, even as others. They should be made to know, the absolute necessity of the new birth, and that there must be a thorough change of the whole man, so as to be no more, what they were by natural Generation; *But to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* Joan. 3. 3, & 5. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5. Eph. 4. 20, -- 24.

And for this end, there ought to be a frequent and earnest inculcating of such Doctrines, as serve to discover the sin and misery of man by nature, and the method of mens being translated out of the power of darkness, into the Kingdom of Christ. A learning of the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, (though that must be) and a rehearsall of them, being only learn'd (as we say) by rote, is not enough to bring men to a due apprehension of their natural condition, and the way of recover-

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ing out of it. No, the myſtery of all thoſe is to be opened to them, with all plainneſs and power; and they muſt be call'd upon, to conſider, what kind of Creatures they were in their conception and nativity, and what courſe muſt be taken for their recovery from under the bondage of Sin and Satan. And if poor ignorant Souls were once throughly inform'd of their ſinfull and ſad condition, as they are deſcended from, and bear the Image of the firſt *Adam*, they would find ſuch diſtempers and diſorders, ſuch horrid unreaſonable luſtings in way of rebellion to all that is of God, as no complaints ſhould be heard out of their mouths, except of their own baſe and wicked hearts.

Theſe therefore I adviſe, Firſt, To ſtudy and know themſelves in manner and form aforeſaid: And when that's once done to the purpoſe, I am confident, they will find themſelves more inclin'd to a favourable conſtruction of all the wayes of Gods grace and Providence. Pride and Ignorance (that ſeldome goe aſunder) are the main things that engage men to diſpute and quarrel about thoſe matters, which can never be apprehended aright by any but humble Souls. For mens parts and learning, I am willing to value them, as farr as they may deſerve. But I cannot account of them, in compariſon of *learning Chriſt, as the truth is in him.* And if there were more of this ſpiritual Chriſt-learning, there would be leſs of diſpute about the Counſels of God, which are rather to be ador'd in ſilence and reverence, than prated of by every audacious,

Eph. 4. 20, 21.

us, malepert and pragmatical Spirit, (as ſometimes they are) without either fear or wit. For whatever be the pretence, 'tis a wicked deſign to excuſe our ſelves, that makes us ſo willing to find out ſomewhat elſe-where, that may ſerve our turn. And when we are once humbled low enough, in the ſenſe of our own baſeneſs, we ſhall have ſo much work at home, to keep us doing, as we ſhall have no liſt nor leiſure to quarrel any other.

And to enforce this part of the Application a little further, by ſhewing the deſperate untowardneſs of man by nature; Conſider, how farr it is infected with the poyſon of Satan, to oppoſe, and (if it were poſſible) to abaſe God, and all his infinite Excellencies. The Devil (whatever his ſin was) for certain, did not ſubmit to Gods order, and thereby he forfeited his right to all the glory and happineſs in which he was firſt placed. And his doings ever ſince his fall have been ſuch, as have ſhewed his pride, and ſpite againſt God, to the utmoſt. And is there not a ſpice of this in all the children of men? Are they not inclin'd to ſet up themſelves, in oppoſition to God, upon any occaſion? Hath not every ſin ſomewhat of this in it? And is it not evident, in that we are ſo prone to contradict, and oppoſe againſt the will of God, even where we have no temptation by the profit or pleaſure of ſin, more than *Auguſtine*, who bewails his robbing of Gardens and Orchards in his youth: *when* (as he ſaith) *the fruits were ſowre, and had no ſauce, more than the ſin of the eater.* Auguſt. *in* Confeſs:

Nay,

Nay, is there not in every ſin more than an intimation, that we would have Gods will ſtoop to ours, and ſo have our wills to countermand his? There is certainly ſo much of diſdain in us, as if it were in our power, God ſhould have no authority over us. We cannot indeed break his yoak from off our necks: But would we not break it off, if we could? Would any man, by his good-will, and of his own inclination, be reſtrain'd from his ſinfull pleaſures, or give any account to God of any thing he doth, if he could help it? Nay, doth not the Spirit in us, luſt towards dethroning him, that he may have no command in the World? And if any queſtion this, I referr them to all thoſe inſolent, proud and arrogant expreſſions and practices of many wicked ones, of which there are ſo many inſtances in Scripture, and other ſtories. And to ſhut up this; If all be well conſidered, it will appear, That all the queſtions and quarrels of men about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and the methods of Salvation, are chiefly occaſioned, becauſe there is ſo much of the Devil, and ſo little of God in us. Were there in us a due acknowledgement of Gods Infinite Excellency, and Soveraign Authority, we ſhould never queſtion in the leaſt, whatever he doth, to be holy, juſt and good. Yea, we ſhould confeſs roundly, That whatever befalls us, or however it be with us, we our ſelves have procur'd and caus'd it, by our own ways and doings. We ſhould ſay (as Gods Servants did of old) *We have treſpaſſed, and done fooliſhly and wickedly, unto us belongs ſhame, and confuſion of face for ever: And bleſſed be the Lord for evermore.*

Ex. 5. 2. 2 Reg. 6. 33. Eſay 14. 13, 14. Ezech. 28. 2.

2 Sam. 24. 17. Dan. 9. 5, 6, 7, 8. Pſal. 89. 52.

I

If any desire further Advice in this case, I say, Whoever thinks there is a God, must think of him so, as may become his infinite Excellency and Glory. *Psal.* 10. 4. We have this property of an ungodly man, *God is not in all his thoughts.* Not that he thinks, there is no God; but that he thinks not, there is a God, *i. e.* He never minds or heeds him, in the whole course of his life and actions. So many never eye or heed God in his Excellencies, to stand in awe of him, and tremble before him. They are too bold with him upon any occasion, and their words and deeds shew, they are not seasoned inwardly, with an holy humble reverence of his infinite Majesty. They speak not (it may be) at the same rate as *Pharaoh, Ex.* 5. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice,* &c. *I know not the Lord,* &c. As if he should have said, *You* (Moses and Aaron) *come, and command me, in the Name of* Jehovah, *who is* Israels *God, as you say. Who is this* Jehovah, *I pray, that I must be commanded by him? I tell you, I know him not, nor do I care for him. I'le do what I have a mind to, let him command what he will.* Though few act to such an height of insolency, as appear'd in him; yet there is the same haughty Spirit of disdain in all men by nature against the heavenly Majesty. They think much to be order'd and over-rul'd by one, of whom they know so little. And whoever observes, may easily see, that God hath little regard amongst worldly men, who will talk indeed a little sometimes, as if there were somewhat call'd a God; and yet in all their words and

deeds, ſhew no apprehenſions of his Excellencies, ſuch as do awe them to reverence and obedience, becoming his abſolute Soveraign Majeſty.

Now, as to believe, there is a God, and yet live as if there were none, is practical Atheiſm; ſo to ſpeak and think of him, otherwiſe than he is, is little better than Blaſphemy. And of ſuch Atheiſm and blaſphemy the World is full; and it is evident by this, that moſt have ſo little reſpect for God, and ſhew it in all they ſay and do. Reſpect, I ſay, for God, ſuch as ſhould be, and ſuch as becomes his infinite Glory. And how unreaſonable are men in this? Hear and conſider what God himſelf ſaith, *Malac.* 1. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter. If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my fear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts unto you, O Prieſts, that deſpiſe my Name?* Here the Lord complains of their ſlighting him, more than any Creature, calling for ſuch reſpect, as was by any man commonly given to his betters. A Maſter or Father could get more reſpect than he, who was both, in an eminent way, to that people. And here one obſerves it, *As the grand deluſion, that blinds the viſible Church, to give good words, and fair titles to God, when no care is had of anſwerable walking. And the Lord makes uſe of that, which every one acknowledges to be a witneſs in the caſe, and ſo proves, That men in their duties to God, come farr ſhort of that, which very Nature will teach them is due to Creatures, ſtanding in the ſame relation.* And this alſo, *That want of reverence, and an high eſtimation of God, is the*

root and rise of all our miscarriages, and an evidence, that we behave our selves neither as Sons nor Servants. Not to esteem of God as he deserves, is to dishonour him; as not to bless him, is in a sort to blaspheme him. God hates and abhorrs base and unworthy conceits of him, and his Majestick Name, when men take him not into their hearts, under the notion of an infinite HIGHNESSE. It shews, there is no awe of God upon them, and that they count of him, as one like themselves, yea, and much below them.

Deum si quis parum metuit, valde contemnit: Fulgent.

And here I could easily enlarge in many Instances of a prophane and proud Spirit in ungodly men, not only in speaking and acting, as if there were no God above them, but speaking and acting many times in such a way, as if they studied to make God as vile as might be. In one word; shewing no reverent esteem, but rather a base undervaluing and contempt of him. They do not only act, as if there were no God, that would call them to an account, but in a way of opposition and scorn, as to shew, how little account they make of him. And for instance; Let one that fears before the Lord, be so bold, as to check a rude and ungodly company, met about some lewd and vile pranks and practices, (such as are too frequent and familiar) by minding them of God, and his commands; how ordinary is it, for such a knot of Companions, to vent themselves the more in scorn and indignation, as if they were affronted by one, that hath nothing to do with them. He that comes among them, with no better authority to awe them, had need

look to himself, that they fall not down right upon him. When righteous *Lot* said no worse to the *Sodomites*, than, *I pray you, Brethren, do not so wickedly*, Gen. 19. 7. *They said, Stand back, and they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a Judge: Now will we deal worse with thee, than with them.* A command or intreaty in the name of God (though the highest Majesty) commonly proves an occasion, through mens devilish pride and disdain, of more and greater impieties and indignities. And if any should question this, let them but open their ears and eyes, and there need be no great dispute about it now adayes. Oh! Look round about, and see, how little regard there is of God, and his commands in the World; and whether there be any account had or made, whether God be pleas'd, or no, with that which is commonly done among men. This, this is enough to sadden any gracious Soul in the expectation of Gods appearances, to vindicate the honour of his great Name, by some remarkable judgements on the World.

And therefore I advise once more, and intreat, That there may be some regard had of God, and that it may be shewed so, as it may be seen, that God is in mens hearts and thoughts. An awfull regard, or reverential esteem of God, would put a check upon mens ungodly practices, and upon their malepert disputes and questions about his wayes and doings. There would need no Arguments in print, to confute them in what they say and do: The awe of God would soon order them to another behaviour, than what com-

commonly appears in the most. And therefore I say again, Goe alone, and seriously resolve thy self of this, That there is a God, who made thee, and all this World, which thine eyes behold. And if thou art once so resolv'd, thine own reason, and common sense, will teach and prompt thee to a further consideration, That this God, as he is infinitely above thee, so he is to be admir'd and ador'd with all possible humble reverence, such as becomes an incomprehensible heavenly Majesty. If thou once resolve, That he is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: *That in him thou livest, and movest, and hast thy being*; and that he alone disposeth of thee, and all thy wayes, and will one day call thee to account for all that thou hast done, thou wilt then see cause enough to fear and tremble at any the least mention of his Name and Glory. Thou wilt no more dispute, what he is pleas'd to do; but presently bethink thy self, how thou mayest do in every respect, so as to please him. Act. 17. 28.

Men talk much in ordinary discourse, of serving God, and a service there is done to God by many; but whether any were done at all, or none, such as many perform, may be a question, as to the advantage of them that do it. * Wherever God is acknowledg'd and own'd in the way of worship which he hath commanded, there is an honour given him, more than amongst Infidels and Idolaters. But they that serve the Lord in his own wayes of worship, must look further, and consider, whether the service be such, as doth some way sute with the glory of his most excellent Majesty, so as he will accept it. The *Jews*

* Read for this, 2 *Chron.* 13. 8, 13.

after their return from captivity, were much in Sacrifices and Offerings: But yet saith the Lord, Malac. 1. 6. *Ye despise my Name*, because *they offered polluted bread*, v. 7. *The blind, and the lame, and sick*, v. 8. This God takes in scorn, and *bids them offer it to their Governour, to try, if he will be pleased with them*, v. 8. Nay, he *curses the deceiver*, v. 14. *for offering a corrupt thing*. And why? v. 14. *Because* (saith he) *I am a great King, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen*. God expects to be dealt withall in such a way, as men may shew that awfull regard they have of him, which when they neglect, it is all one to him, as if they did nothing at all. The customary, formal and superficial service done to God by many, is of as much account with him, as if they mocked him to his face*. And that for this reason, *viz.* Because they shew no regard of God, such as they owe to his infinite Soveraignty, Power and Glory. The service of God so performed, shews mens prophanness and impiety, more than their devotion. And yet this prophane contempt of God is born with us, and bred (as I may say) in our bones. And till we be throughly convinc'd of it, and humbled for it, we are in no capacity to close with God, so as he may be pleased with us. If thou wilt serve God with acceptance, resolve first of this natural enmity, that is in thee against God, and be humbled as low as Hell, for the pride of thine heart, swelling so much against him. And when thou knowest indeed, as thou ought'st, the distance 'twixt the glorious God of Heaven, and such an earth-worm as thy self, thou wilt find thine

* Hag. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14.

heart

heart inclin'd to more favourable thoughts of God and his wayes, which is the main thing I am perſwading men to, in this Diſcourſe.

I ſhall yet a little further inforce that which hath been formerly hinted, more than once, *viz.* A ſerious conſideration of that enmity which is naturally in us againſt our ſelves, and our own ſouls. There is indeed a curſed ſelf-love in all men by nature, which cauſeth them to walk contrary to God; yea, and in ſome degree, to deſpite him, as the Devil doth: And this appears to be the root of all mans rebellion againſt God, in that our Saviour, calling all men home to God again, impoſeth upon them nothing elſe but *ſelf-denial*, *Mat.* 16. 24. But this natural, ſinfull ſelf-love, is indeed no other than perfect enmity to our ſelves; ſo as we may truly ſay, we are ſuch as hate our own ſouls: How elſe do we all that we can, to undo and deſtroy our ſelves? and do we not thus? and are we inclin'd by nature to any thing elſe? For certain, there's no way to advance, and (as I may ſay) to make our ſelves, but by walking in the way, wherein we may come to the enjoyment of God; and this is not the way of our own hearts, nor the way of the wicked and corrupted World of mankind; for *The world lieth in wickedneſs*, 1 *Joan.* 5. 19. or, in the wicked one, *i. e.* is wholly under the power and vaſſallage of the Devil. And this appears by the conſtant inclination of all the World, to walk in thoſe wayes, unto which the Devil prompts, and tempts them, *i. e.* the ways of ſin and rebellion, againſt the righteous and

Ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται· In maligno poſitus eſt.

holy wills of God. This is the way of death and destruction, wherein men depart from God, and so cause him at last to say unto them, *Depart from me*, &c. How can we come to God, but in the wayes of his Commandments? this is the way wherein he hath promised to be found of us; and to leave this way, and go in the way of our own hearts, is no other than turning our backs upon God, and casting him off, in hope to be happy in the enjoyment of somewhat else; this is the way of self-destruction, wherein men run on to ruine and perdition.

Mat. 25. 6.

Now I say again, consider, and that sadly, whether we are not all enemies to our selves, and our own souls, in chusing those wayes, which we cannot but know, have a direct tendency to our everlasting undoing? True, men do not consider this, but that's their folly and madness, the same that is in many, who never look after their worldly Estates to improve them, but spend, and squander them away, they care not how; we use to say of such ill husbands, that they are enemies to themselves, and will undo themselves and their Families, as indeed they do, according to what the Wise man saith, *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness* (or sloth) *shall cloath a man with rags.* Just so do men impoverish, and undo themselves, as to their everlasting estates, by taking those wayes and courses, that carry them on to the bottomless pit. The glutton and the drunkard would not be poor, nor would ungodly men go to hell; yea but both the one and the other, take the ready way to their undoing; and it is all one,

Prov. 23. 21.

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as if they said, we will undo our selves, and we will be damn'd; seeing they go on in those ways wherein they cannot avoid and escape damnation: whatever they pretend, they do just as a man that should cast himself into the wide sea, and say, I will not be drown'd, but swim out again; or should stab himself at the heart, and say, I have no intent to kill my self: let such intend what they will, all rational and sober men know, they cannot live, but must die. There's an indissoluble tie between sin and death, so as we cannot take the one without the other. *Cast away from you all your transgressions*, &c. *For why will you die? Ezech.* 18. 31. as if he should have said, *If you do not the former, you must have the latter, and in the way you now go you seek your own death. He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul, Prov.* 8. *ult.* And how doth he wrong it? the next words shew, *He loves death.* To hate, and scorn the wayes of Christ, is to love death, it is so in the effect: he that hates to be reformed, (and too many such there are) hates to be saved; he that loves to be wicked, loves to be damn'd. The wicked World is wilde, and stark mad in this respect, and doth as all mad men do; a mad man casts off all care of himself, and is pleas'd in nothing, but his ravings and frantick pranks, and will not be perswaded to any better: such mad men are we in our sins, pleas'd with nothing so much, as that which most displeaseth God, and hath a direct tendency towards our own destruction. Bring a Physician, or Chyrurgeon to a mad man, and you set him the more a raving, so as you must bind him, and over-

master

master him by force, or he will admit of no applications to be made for curing him; all his business is to do that which doth torment him, and will undo him: So do all wilfull sinners; they devise, and do nothing, but what makes for working out their damnation; they are troubled about nothing, but that they cannot sin enough, and serve their worldly and fleshly desires, so much as they would; and is not this enmity against themselves, and their own souls? For what can a man do, to destroy his soul, and pull upon himself the most intollerable condemnation, more than to sin, as much as possibly he can? The wayes of sin are the wayes of destruction to poor souls; and the only way to life is a turning from all the wayes of sin, with loathing and indignation; and this no sinner will deny, if he please to sit down and consider it. But such is the impetuousness of our lusts, as they will not give us leave to entertain one serious thought, about the sad consequence of what we are a doing. Mad men have sometimes their lucid intervals, but so soon as any occasion stirs their frantick humour, they are as mad as ever; in those intervals they are as mad as before, but do not act their madness so much. The worst of men are not alike wicked at all times, in acting their wickedness, though their hearts are always set upon their wicked wayes. For their fair promises sometimes of amendment, they are no more than what a mad man will promise in a good mood.

And now, all you poor sinfull Souls, consider your wayes, and be wise; *Be not as the horse and*

mule

mule, that have no understanding, Psal. 32. 9. You are so by nature, and of your selves, through the poison which the Devil hath infus'd to you; only you have Reason, which Beasts have not; and you have a liberty to do otherwise than you do, if you had a mind to it: you are told, and you know the dangerous consequence of your sinfull wayes, and why will you die? Is there profit in destruction? Can there be pleasure in sinning for a moment, when the pains of Hell will be endless, and intollerable? Or can you devise a way, how you may enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and yet escape the torments of Hell for ever? Have you so much power in your hands, as to reverse the Acts and Decrees of Heaven, established by a declared Law, so as death shall not be the wages of sin? Or do you think to put off the righteous Judge of all the earth, in the last day, as well as you can abuse and baffle your Consciences, and faithfull Ministers now? I believe you have some such thoughts, or you would not take the courses that you do: But *O ye fools, when will you be wise? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.* Can you be such bruitish sots, as not to know, that the World to come will be quite another thing than this present evil World? Here is a place to sin in; there will be only suffering for impenitent sinners; Here wicked men talk wildly, as if their tongues were their own, and there were no Lord over them: There the righteous Lord will deal with them, and they will not have a word to answer. Consider how dead folks are dealt with here; are they not

Psal. 94. 8. verse. 11.

not bound, and laid up where they cannot ſtir. Oh! think of it, as a preſage of that eſtate wherein your ſouls, as well as your bodies, will be in another World. There your hands and feet will be tyed, and your mouthes will be ſtopp'd, ſo as you ſhall not be able to peep, or mutter one word: or if you ſhould rage, and cry out in thoſe everlaſting burnings, what will it avail you, ſo long as your bonds are made ſtrong, and you cannot break them? Oh! think of this you preſumptuous, daring ſinners, while there is time for repentance; for this is the ſad condition you are haſtning to, and nothing can be ſaid or done to ſtop you in your career. When you are moſt frolick, you are but heaping up fewel, to feed the everlaſting burnings. And when you are moſt froward in your wayes, you ſhew only the enmity that is in you, againſt your own ſouls. You ſay in effect, Let us alone, and trouble us not, we are in the way to Hell and deſtruction, and we will not be turn'd out of it; you are not willing to be damn'd, you'l ſay, but hope to be ſav'd, as well as others: So are Robbers and Murderers, *&c.* not willing to be hang'd, more than honeſt men; but honeſt men know that rogues and thieves take the ready way to the gallows. They may, ſome of them, eſcape mens judgement, and no queſtion, ſome of them ſometimes do, but how will you eſcape the judgement of God, who knoweth all, and can do every thing? And will he not (think you) make good his Word, and execute his own Lawes? How elſe ſhall he quit himſelf, and ſhew that he is above you? Think, when you ſee dead folk imprisoned,

nisoned, and bound up in their graves, how you will be hamper'd, and pinion'd, when you shall be brought forth to Judgement, and what pitifull poor sneaking worms you will then appear to be, when God shall sit on the Throne of his glory, and call all Nations before him, to be judged by him.

Now this is all the work you are a doing, *viz.* To pinion your selves, and lay upon you, those everlasting chains of darkness, wherewith you shall be bound, and cast into the fire unquenchable. Every sin you commit with greedines, and will not be perswaded to lay it aside, is one twist more, to strengthen the cords that shall bind you fast for ever, and puts more fewel to those everlasting burnings.

If all this do not convince you, cast your eyes back, and take a review of all those reasons, I have formerly given to prove, that you your selves only are in the fault, and that God is in no respect wanting to you. I shall repeat, and press some of them a little further.

Not to say (what is most certainly true) that Gods decrees have left you at liberty, to choose the way you have most mind to, and that you are not left out, as excepted persons, in the Act of General pardon, if you will be perswaded to receive Christ, as he is offered to you; and also that you have a liberty to act in order to your happines, if you would use it, and not wilfully run on in your own wayes.

1. Consider, what equity, and reason there is in all the wayes of Gods commandments, specially now under the New Testament, when we have that,

Rom. 12. 1. that, which the Apostle calls *our reasonable service*; We need not be prompted (as the Jews were) to understand why they are enjoyn'd us, for that, they are not good, because they are commanded; but rather commanded, because they are good. And for the wayes of his Providence and Grace, I would have you ask your own consciences, what prerogative God challengeth to himself, more, than even mortal men are ready to count their due. Oh! that men would but think, how he can be indeed a God, and not have liberty to do what he himself pleaseth. Though I stand still to defend, that all Gods wayes are righteousness and truth, being Eph. 1. 11. all *according to the counsel of his will*, and managed by infinite wisdome. Yea our belief of a Deity, and one absolute soveraign Lord God, doth necessarily inferr a belief of all his wayes to be most holy, just, and good. And will you not then obey, and submit? Oh! consider, what can be said against it.

2. Consider further what your own consciences say in this case, and if they speak out now, what sometimes you would not hear; how will you be able to abide the clamours of them, when there will be no way left you, to bribe them, or stop their mouthes, as now you can make a shift to do. You now find them to stir, and work strongly upon occasion, and therefore may presume, they will one day be too hard for you, and have the dominion over you. I tell you, those consciences of yours, are Gods witnesses against your wicked wayes, and your forewarnings to flee from the wrath to come;

come; ſo that you have no excuſe upon this account.

3. Ask your ſelves, ſo as to anſwer the queſtion ſeriouſly, Why you are ſo impatient of ſharp rebukes, and ſound admonitions, from the Word, whether by faithfull Miniſters, or others, applyed to you. Will not your own Conſciences then tell you, that your caſe is the ſame with thoſe ſick and wounded people, who had rather dye, than endure the pain of having their wounds ſearch'd, or their diſeaſes cur'd by unſavoury medicines? Yea, will not your Conſciences ſay, That you might have been healed, as well as others, that were content to ſubmit to the methods of cure preſcrib'd them? You cannot ſay, *There is no balm in* Gilead, *there is no Phyſician there*: *Why then is not your health recovered?* Surely, for this reaſon, and no other, That when the Lord would have healed you, you would not be healed. Jer. 8. ult.

4. Ask your ſelves again, How it comes to paſs, that you are alwayes wharting and quarrelling thoſe, that pretend ſo much to God, and the wayes of his Commandments? Is it indeed, becauſe they are ſo bad and baſe, as you would make them? Or is it not rather, becauſe they ſhine before you, to ſhew you the good, and the right way, and you have no mind to walk in it? Is not their eſchewing your ungodly wayes, a check upon you, that you cannot ſo freely take your ſwinge in them, and therefore you hate the light of their good works, becauſe it diſcovers the filthineſs of your beaſtly converſation? Oh! Remember and conſider, they ſhall be your witneſſes,

neſſes, to leave you without excuſe. Yea, if they were as bad as you would make them, yet that will be no excuſe to you, who ſhould have done what they did not, your own Conſciences being Judges.

5. Once more. Do not you accuſe your ſelves, in calling ſo often for ſuch extraordinary appearances of God in providence, as may convince you, when you have had many ſuch, and are but the more hardned and enrag'd againſt God? How uſuall is it, for men to have ſtrange and almoſt miraculous reſcues and recoveries, or to ſee and obſerve ſuch in others, and yet 'tis not eaſie to give many inſtances of Converts by occaſion of ſuch wonderful deliverances. To ſay no more, the appearances of God in this age have been as remarkable and admirable almoſt, as in any, and yet the ungodlineſs of men generally, is moſt notorious notwithſtanding. Now, what have you to ſay againſt this? Shall not theſe be witneſſes againſt you?

6. Anſwer me yet in one queſtion more. Why (I pray you) do you ſo much magnifie the Saints of old, who are now in Heaven? Shall not they (think you) be your Judges? Why, (Sirs,) they were all of them holy men, that led their lives on earth, as becommeth Saints? and they were ſo farr from ſpending their time in ſinfull pleaſures, as you do, *That their righteous Soules were vexed with the filthy converſation of the Wicked*, 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. Your Conſciences will tell you, that you lead a life, as contrary to theirs, as black is to white, or darkneſs to light. Do not you then, in your applauding them with

you

your mouths; and confessing them to be now Saints in Heaven, judge and condemn your selves, and call them to witness against you, that you had light held out to you by their examples, but you wilfully refus'd to walk in the way to Heaven, wherein they went before you?

7. I shall say no more of this, after I have pos'd you with this one question more. There are some of your good fellows (you know it to be so) that have cried out most lamentably upon their death-beds, as one did once, *O! Call time again, call time again.* O! What would not they have given, to have recovered the time which they had mis-spent? Now these will be your Judges. For whatever they thought before, then they were of the mind, that a wise and carefull expending our time here, whiles we are alive, is the way to obtain peace and comfort when we come to dye. They could not then say, (as some do in their youth and strength) *If we are Elected, we shall be saved, and if not, we must be damned*; and so quietly sleep away, and put it to the adventure. No; Conscience (if it be then awakened) will tell you somewhat else. It will tell you then, That you might have employed your selves to better purpose; and that if you had taken the same course, that the Saints do, while they are on earth, you might depart in peace, as well as they. Yea, let me tell you, Conscience, when you come to dye, will not trouble you about any other matters, than your wilfull rejecting the offers of grace and mercy, when they were made to you; and your chusing the wayes of sin, when you had been often told,

they were the ready way to Hell and Destruction.

And now I say again, Whatever disputes and reasonings there be among some, about the method, and manner, and matter of Gods Decrees, Let all poor Souls consider, in due time, what is that way of life, which is held out, and offered to them in the Gospel. We cannot know, what God hath decreed, till it be some way reveal'd to us: But we may know (if we will) what is the way of life, as certain as God is true, who hath reveal'd it. God (I am sure) cannot lye, and his mouth hath spoken it, and his finger hath written it, *That whoever believeth, shall be saved.* I need not cite or quote the Texts of Scripture, that speak, with one mouth, the mind of God in this: Whoever hath read or heard the Scripture, cannot but know this to be an unmoveable Foundation-truth.

And therefore I desire men seriously to consider, how they will excuse themselves one day, when they shall be question'd, Why they did not believe on Christ offered to them in the Gospel. For no doubt, if they do this, as God commands and requires, they shall be saved, or God must prove a lyar. And for any decree of God, to hinder men from believing on Christ, I hope enough hath been said before, to shew, there is no such thing. Besides, the extent of Christs death (as hath been shewed) is large enough to reach, and take in all, that will come to him. And there is nothing but a froward wicked heart stands between men, and their happiness, in the enjoyment of God. Wherefore, I say again,

in the name of the Lord, as our Saviour in a different ſenſe ſaid to *Martha*, *Joan.* 11. 40. *If thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God. He that believeth not God, hath made him a lyar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life*, 1 Joan. 5. 10, 11, 12. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, Joan. 3. 36. Here we ſee, as in all the Scripture beſide, That Faith, and Faith only, gives us an intereſt in eternal life, and that this, and nothing elſe, will be the condemnation of the World, that they believed not on the Son of God tendred to them, as one that *can ſave to the utmoſt, all that come unto God by him.* Heb 7.25.

If any ſay, That ſome have never heard of Chriſt, and then *how can they believe on him, of whom they have not heard?* Ro. 10. 14. I ſhall not here diſpute with them about this, but refer them to what I have ſaid before, deſiring them withall, to underſtand me now, as meaning all that have heard of Chriſt, amongſt whom there have been many that ſhall not be ſav'd. And of theſe I ſay again, their condemnation ſhall be only upon the account of their unbelief. Either becauſe they ſet light by Chriſt, when they heard of him, as many do to this day, not ſo much as owning the profeſſion of the Goſpel; or elſe *they receive the grace of God in vain*, and turn it into wantonneſs, by uſing it, as *an occaſion to the flesh.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. Jude 4. Gal 5. 13.

Now, For a Concluſion of this whole Diſcourſe; I ſhall deal with theſe laſt, deſiring them to conſider, Whether they give all diligence, to walk in the way of life, which God hath laid before them. And all that I intend, is to ſhew their miſtakes about it, and to adviſe and direct them in it.

But whiles I was about this, there were brought me ſome Objections, which though they be (as I conceive) ſufficiently anſwered already, at leaſt the chiefeſt of them, yet ſomewhat I ſhall add further, to explain what was ſaid before.

Obj. If God be ſo willing, that men ſhould repent and believe, why do they not repent and believe? *For who hath reſiſted his will*, *Ro.* 9. 19. This we find by our ſelves, that if we will do ought, we do it if we can; and if we do it not, it is becauſe we have not power to do as we would.

Sol. For the Will of God, as to the Salvation of all, in caſe they repent and believe, there is no queſtion; and ſo (as I remember) ſome underſtand the Apoſtle, *1 Tim.* 2. 4. But that is not the queſtion, but this rather, How God wills the repentance of men, who never repent. For ſeeing God can do whatever he will, why are not they alſo converted? And to this I anſwer, That God wills the converſion of Sinners, ſo as their converſion is well-pleaſing to him, and accepted with him; as on the contrary, he is diſpleaſed with Sinners, ſo long as they live in impenitency. *The holy Angels rejoyce over one Sinner that repenteth*, and God much more, ſeeing it

Luc. 15. 10.

it is his command, that they repent. And how ſhould God will mens repentance, otherwiſe than he doth? He declares his will in his command, and in his promiſe of acceptance, and in his refuſing none upon their repentance; and for any other will of God, concerning this or that mans repentance, who knows it, or where hath God reveal'd it? What! Would you have God to decree and effect the converſion of all and every one, whether they will or no? If any ſay, No; but we would have God to deal with all indifferently, as being all the work of his hands: I anſwer, That ſaving to God but ſo much liberty, as all men ordinarily take to themſelves, his dealings with men are indifferent, and his wayes moſt equall, ſeeing he hath ſo prepar'd, as men need not periſh, except they will themſelves. And therefore, I ſay once more, they periſh and dye in their ſins, only becauſe they chuſe the wayes of their deſtruction. How then dare any man make any further queſtion about Gods will of ſaving men, when he hath ſo decreed, and ſo provided, that men may be ſaved if they will? I mean it thus, If they do not wilfully refuſe their Salvation, when it is offered them, by an obſtinate rejecting the way he commands them to walk in, and to which they are invited and encouraged by his promiſe, wherein it is impoſſible that he ſhould lye. And this we affirm ſtill, according to what hath been ſaid before.

Obj. Seeing it is Gods will, that men ſhall be damned, in caſe they believe not; It doth not appear, that there is in God a will of ſaving, rather than of damning, becauſe there is in all men

a proneneſs and inclination to unbelief and impenitency, more than to faith and repentance.

Sol. We grant, there is a proneneſs and inclination in all men by nature, to unbelief and impenitency, with an untowardneſs and enmity to faith and repentance. But we ſay again, as before, That men may repent and believe, if they will. For men are not damn'd, for that they cannot repent, though they be never ſo willing to it; but they are damn'd only, becauſe they will not repent, nor turn from their evil wayes, but wilfully goe on in them, againſt all means and methods us'd for the reclaiming of them. And may not God then ſay, and ſwear too, as he doth, *Ezech.* 33.11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.*

Ezech. 18. 30,31,32.

Obj. I want the helps that others have, and was never brought up in learning, as many are.

Sol. To this I anſwer, That Chriſt may be learn'd by the veriеſt Ideots, if they have but a willing mind, as ſoon, and as eaſily, as by the greateſt Maſters of Arts and Sciences. And in this caſe we may ſay, what hath been commonly ſaid in a different ſenſe, *That the greateſt Clerks are not alwayes the wiſeſt men.* The Devil is certainly the greateſt Scholar below Heaven, as to all things pertaining to this World: Yet he is never the nearer to the learning of Chriſt, and the knowledge of God in Chriſt. Humane learning is a very precious ornament and endowment in them that have it: But through the ſinfull corruption of man, it many times proves to be an occaſion of hindring them, in their being taught by

by Christ, as the truth is in him. The great Rabbies (you know) were Christs most bitter enemies; and *Not many wise men, after the flesh, are called,* saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *The Gospell preacheth only Christ the power of God, and the wisdome of God*; so as the weakest understanding is as capable of this Heavenly and Spiritual learning as any others. Suppose thou canst not so much as read a Chapter, what hinders, that thou dost not hear others read? Whatever thy apprehension, and memory be, there wants nothing to thy denial of thy self, and all ungodlines, and worldly lusts, if thou do not retain a wilfull, and froward heart against Christ, and his commands. Learn only what the Grace of God teacheth thee, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. and thou hast learnt enough. 'Tis not thy want of other Learning, can hinder, or keep thee from Heavens way, if thou wilt repent heartily of thy sinnes, and turn from all iniquity, with a full and absolute resignation of thy self to serve the Lord Christ. *This knowledge* (I may truly say) *is easie to him that doth understand*, Prov. 14. 6. Where he that doth understand, cannot be meant otherwise, than of a man that hath an humble and an honest heart; because in the same place, he is set in opposition to *A scorner, who seeketh wisdome*, (as 'tis there said) *and findeth it not.* The Original is only [*and not*,] and the meaning is plainly this, That proud scornfull men can never attain to true Wisdome, which is easie to an humble, and willing minde. And this you have set forth at large, *Prov.* 2. 1, 7. to the perusal of which place I refer the Reader, and so proceed.

Eph. 4. 22.

1 Cor. 1. 24.

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Obj. I want time to attend the working out of my Salvation; for I am a servant, and must work to please my Master, *&c.* I have but little to live upon, and must spend all my time, to maintain my self, and my Family.

Sol. Strange! Cannot servants work to please God, and their Masters too? the Apostle thought they might do both, though Servants then were mostly Slaves, and many of them had Heathens and Infidels to their Masters. Thou art a Servant, and canst not have so much time, as others who are free; yet know this for thy comfort, that thy faithfulness, and diligence in thy Masters business, is pleasing to God, and an honour to the Gospel. If thou hast not so much time as some others, for waiting on God in his Ordinances, and in all the duties of his Worship and Service, yet a carefull improvement of the time thou hast; and what cannot be denyed thee, will be accepted, when thou hast no more. I say not, thou should'st serve thy Master in the wayes of sin, with a neglect of thy duty towards God: But I say, use the time thou hast, to the best advantage; and thou shalt be accepted according to what thou hast. But beware, thou be not one of those Servants, who have Masters, that are willing to teach them, and they have no minde to learn the wayes of God: Beware also, thou pretend not thy Masters business, when thou art not carefull to redeem the time, and improve the seasons, which may be recovered by thy diligence, and care.

1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Tit. 2. 9, 10.

The same in effect I say to such as are poor, if they cannot spare so much time, as others can, they

they may be accepted in what they have, if there be but a willing minde. And to all these I say further, though there is need for all to addres themselves to God in prayer and praise, &c. as we all need our ordinary repasts to recruit our faint spirits, and frail bodies; yet the life of Religion is shew'd most in the duties of our particular callings, and personal relations; in these we must spend, and express the strength, and grace we obtain of God, by our waiting upon him in Ordinances, and Religious exercises. A Christian is not bound to spend all his time in Reading, and Hearing, &c. much, yea most of it, must be laid out on the works of their callings, wherein our diligence, and integrity, and faithfulnes is our living to God. And if in our Earthly employments, we retain Heavenly affections, making Conscience of all we do, as desirous, to approve our selves to God, in this we do Gods work, and keep on, in our way to Heaven. No honest Calling is, or can be any hinderance to the life of Godlines, if we labour, in all we do, to keep a good Conscience. If our small stock, or mean estate will not allow us so much time, for some Religious exercises, as others have, we may notwithstanding practise Holines, and exercise our selves unto Godlines, in our lawfull employments, if we have honest hearts, as well as they.

Obj. God requires no more than he gives; Now God hath not given me to Repent, &c. and what can I do?

Sol. This (I think) hath been sufficiently answer'd already, yet I shall add a word or two more. God requires no more than he gives

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so say I; but I say also, he will require so much as he gives. Now canst thou, or dar'st thou say, that God hath not given thee time, and space to Repent? yea hath he not waited long for thee? yea dar'st thou say, he hath not given thee to Repent, &c. when he hath given thee light to see the errour, and the evil of thy wayes? what would'st thou have? God hath commanded thee, and intreated thee, and by many, and sundry motions made to thee, sometimes allured thee, and at other times affrighted thee. His Word, his Spirit, his Works of Mercy and Judgement, have bespoken thee, again and again, to cast away thy Transgressions, but thou would'st not, and only because thou loved'st thy ungodly wayes, and found'st pleasure in them, thou would'st not be perswaded to leave them. And wilt thou say yet, that God hath not given thee, to return to him? I hope thou wilt not blaspheme God openly, in saying, that he hath tempted thee to thy evil wayes. Neither did he, or any other force thee, for thou wast wholly inclin'd, and addicted to them, and angry at all that would put thee out of them. I shall say no more, but only desire thee, to answer thy self, and thine own Conscience, in this one Question, *viz.* why thou dost not forsake thy wicked ways? I say again, ask, and answer that Question sincerely, and as in the sight of God, and thou shalt finde thine own Heart will tell thee, that thou lik'st, and lov'st the profits, and the pleasures of thy sinfull wayes, so as thou hast no minde to leave them. And if thou finde it not so, call me lyar upon this account. Now whose fault is it,

that thou loveſt thy ſins? But I muſt go on to finiſh this Diſcourſe. And for a concluſion, I ſhall very plainly and briefly, ſhew the miſtakes of men, about the only way of life, with the beſt advice I can give about it.

The only way of Life, that I know of, is believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For this we have a command, and a promiſe, as is to be ſeen in very many Texts, which I need not mention, becauſe they are obvious to the meaneſt underſtanding. This is the tenour of the only Covenant of Peace and Life, *If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou ſhalt be ſaved*, Ro. 10. 9, 10, 11. Joan. 3. 16, & 36, &c. Yea this is receiv'd among all profeſſed Chriſtians, that believing on the Son of God is the way of Life, and Salvation. But the moſt of thoſe, who profeſs the Faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are much to ſeek, and at a great loſs, about the way of believing, to the ſaving of their Souls. For their ſakes therefore, I ſhall lay before them, the good, and the right way of Salvation, by Faith in the Son of God, and aſſure them in the name of God, that whoever is reſolv'd to walk in that way, ſhall as certainly be ſaved, as thoſe who are already in Heaven. And this I ſhall do, that (if it be poſſible) they may be perſwaded, no more to diſpute, or quarrel Gods Decrees, or Chriſts dying for all Sinners, or the inability, that is in all men by nature, to all that's ſpiritually good, or any thing elſe, beſides the frowardneſs of their own corrupt, and perverſe hearts.

For the way of Salvation by Faith only, it is this; The Goſpel, which only reveals the way

of

of living by Faith, makes an offer of Christ, to all without exception, in case they Believe, *Joan.* 3. 16. and many other places. And when any man is effectually perswaded to receive Christ, as he is offer'd, then he Believes, to the saving of his Soul. If any desire to know further, what it is to receive Christ, I answer, that it is the Souls hearty consenting to have him, upon the same terms, on which he is offer'd. This is that, which (as I may say) makes up the match between Christ, and any Soul; so as thence forward, it stands in relation to Christ, as a Woman to her Husband, after her consent obtain'd, and declar'd, and so hath an interest in him, and all his Estate. This is the eminency, and precedency of Faith, to all other Graces, that it is the Souls consenting to have Christ, as her all in all. For when the Soul so consents, a man is thereupon justified, and accepted with God. This consent indeed doth imply love and obedience, and faithfulness to Christ, all our dayes; and if there be not afterwards a performance of all accordingly, for certain the consent at first, was not sincere, and hearty. *For we are delivered from the hands of our enemies, that we may serve him*, &c. Luc. 1. 74. *We are redeem'd from all iniquity to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. But yet the consent which is first given, sets a man in the state, and relation of a justified person, which afterwards he proves himself to be, by yielding willing obedience to all the Commands of Christ. For Love, and all the fruits of it in a Christians whole course, are but the performance of what was promis'd, when

he

he first consented to have Christ for his only Lord and Saviour; and where these do not attend, there never was any hearty consent. But Faith (I say again) hath the precedency, in that it is the Souls consenting to take Christ upon his own terms, and so Faith alone justifies us.

Now, if what hath been said of our being justified by Faith alone, be rightly apprehended, there will need no dispute about the concurrence of works in our justification. But leaving all such disputes, as no way concerning my present purpose, I shall only take notice of such mistakes, as are ordinary, and do offer themselves (as it were) to us, upon this occasion, to be considered of.

For certain, the way of believing, is the only way of living with God for ever. But the mistakes of men about this way, are the great occasion of their miscarriage: I mean it of such as hear the Gospel, have Christ offered to them, and do profess to believe on him, as all or most do with us.

There are only two that deserve our notice, and if there be any other, they may be reduc'd to these. And these two are extremes, not so farr from one another, as both are from the right way of living by Faith.

First, Some (though they pretend not to merit) do almost turn the Covenant of grace into a Covenant of works, and so pervert the Gospel of Christ to their own destruction. I do not mean, That they make account to be saved by vertue of the first Covenant, made with *Adam* in

in innocency: For never was there a man, *Jew* or *Gentile*, that did not acknowledge himself a sinner. And this appears, in that all of them have used means, true or false, right or wrong, to make an attonement for their Souls. But I mean such as the *Jews*, *Who attained not to the Law of righteousness, because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law*, Ro. 9. 31, 32. [*as it were*] Not wholly, or altogether, but in a sort, as it were, or after a manner. And how was that? Surely thus: When they knew themselves sinners before the Lord, and should have look'd to Christ only, as the alone propitiation for sin, they applyed themselves to their legal services and sacrifices, hoping to find acceptance with God, though they look'd not at all by faith unto him, who was the end of the Law, and all the righteousness of men before God. Thus they perverted the Covenant of grace, and made it of none effect to them, and so do others to this day. And if you desire to know how and wherein, I answer, thus:

Αλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων νόμ.

When God hath shewed us Christ, as our only Salvation, and given us means for bringing us near to him, and building us up in acquaintance with him, *viz.* His Word and Sacraments, *&c.* What do the most of professing Christians count of more, than hearing, and receiving the Sacraments, and their good Prayers, *&c.* as so much good service done to God, and make account they please God well enough, so long as these services are not wholly omitted or neglected by them.

This

This is a great miſtake, and for a further diſcovery of it, take notice,

1. That working and doing what is commanded us of God, being the condition of the Covenant made with *Adam*, there is in every man ſince, an inclination to think of pleaſing God, by ſomewhat that he himſelf doth. And this is to be ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, which is nothing elſe, but the obedience of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to the will of his Father. For this the Apoſtle avouches, *Ro.* 5. 19. *That by this alone we are made righteous.* For our own performances, they are all imperfect; and when we do our utmoſt, we do but endeavour to perform the promiſe which we made to Chriſt; when we firſt conſented to receive him as our Lord and Saviour; and thoſe performances have all of them need to be pardoned, as to the defects of them, through the application of his righteouſneſs to our ſelves by faith. Yea, and if we are not firſt united to him, by a ſincere and ſound faith, all our performances are an abomination, as the Scripture ſpeaks often, *Pro.* 15.8. *Pro.* 28. 9. *Pſal.* 66. 18. *&c.*

2. The way that God hath laid out for us to walk in, that we may live, is firſt to know and acknowledge our own loſt eſtate and condition by ſin, with an utter impoſſibility to recover our ſelves otherwiſe, than in a way of free pardon by grace, which we receive by faith. And when we have thus clos'd with Chriſt, and receiv'd him, as our only righteouſneſs before God, then in way of thankfulneſs for ſuch an unſpeakable grace, we are to ſee our ſelves about

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the service of Christ our Lord Redeemer. This our obedience to our Lord and Saviour, is not any the least part of that price, which was paid to procure and purchase our pardon. Nor is our consenting to receive Christ, as he is offered to us, by faith, any part of amends made to God, for the wrong done him by mans sin and transgression. Only the righteousness and obedience of the Son, in doing and suffering all that was enjoyn'd him by his Father, is the price of our Redemption, and that wherein God is well pleased. And so is Christ offer'd to us, as our all and only righteousness, which we receive by faith, as a man receives a rich gift freely given him, upon no other condition, than his willing and hearty acceptance of it. The gift is not the less free, because a man cannot be enriched by it, unless he receive and take it. No more is our justification by Christs righteousness less free, because we have not the benefit, till by faith we apply it to our selves. The Feast is prepared without our cost or care, and all we do, is but to come and partake of it, which is done only by our believing on the Lord our righteousness. As for our obedience to Christ, and serving him all our
Luc. 1 74. dayes in holiness and righteousness before him, it is but going on to the full possession of the heavenly inheritance, and the same with *Working out our Salvation*, *Philip.* 2. 12. Or, *Finishing our Sanctification*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. That is, employing all our abilities, and using all the means which God hath appointed for the accomplishment of our Salvation. When we first believe with the heart, we are put into the right way,

but

but we are not presently at the end of our Race. We are only as Travailers, pressing on toward our home; or as Racers, posting towards the goal. There is a rich Inheritance purchas'd for us, without any cost of ours; only we must go, to take possession of it. And this cannot be in works, and wayes of ungodliness, (for they tend to Hell, and destruction) but in wayes of Righteousness and Holiness, which God hath appointed to be the way to the Kingdome, though not the cause of Reigning.

Besides, In the wayes of Righteousness, we shew, and approve our selves, to have believed from the heart, which is the Justification by Works, which the Apostle meant, *Jac.* 2. 21. and *v.* 22. he clears it sufficiently in saying, *By Works was Faith made perfect.* That is, declared, or shewed, and prov'd such as it is, even as Gods power is said to be *perfected in weakness*; 2 Cor. 12. 9. that is, declared to be as it is, All-sufficient for our relief, and so to be acknowledged by us. And thus are our Works the only good evidence, of our believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, to the saving of our Souls. For *by adding one Grace to another*, *i.e.* acting every Grace in its due season, and order, *We give all diligence, to make our calling and our election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 11. This, and this alone will be the evidence of our Faith, in the great day of Account; and hence it is said so often in Scripture, That God will judge every man according to his Works: That is, he will judge, and try Men by what they have done, to prove and

Quòd vera fides inde comprobetur. Calvin. *Materiam habet se exerendi, quam se prodit hominum infirmitas.* Id.

approve themſelves ſound Believers, in the ſight of God, Angels, and Men.

Now by what hath been ſaid, many may learn to know their foul miſtake in this particular. 'Tis not, O vain man, the good Service, thou haſt done to God, that is, or will be thy Righteouſneſs before him. What is it to him, that thou haſt wept, and prayed before him, or been at any, never ſo great coſt, and pains about doing any work, that he hath commanded thee. He hath no need of thy Services, or Sacrifices, Pſal. 50. 8. 14. *Neither canſt thou be profitable to God,* as thou mayſt be to thy ſelf, or another. And when thou haſt done thy beſt, thou haſt need of Grace to pardon that which is wanting. Tell me, Did'ſt thou ever pray, or praiſe God ſo, as thou durſt expect acceptance, upon thine own account? Sure, thy deſire to be heard, and accepted upon the account of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhews the contrary. Why doſt thou then talk idly, of what thou haſt done and ſuffered?

Job 22. 2, 3.

Obj. I make no account of meriting at the hands of God?

Sol. I know not what thou mak'ſt account of; but why doſt thou build ſo much upon ſo rotten a foundation, as thine own Works, and Doings? And that thou doſt ſo, is apparent, by thy Phariſaical boaſtings, that thou art not, as other men are. Why do ſo many, when they are asked a reaſon of the Hope, that is in them, ſo readily anſwer, that they have not ſo behav'd themſelves, as not to hope well about their Salvation? The beſt Saints have made it an evidence

Luc. 18. 11, 12.

of

of their Faith, and Hope, and Joy in God; as *Nehemiah*, and *Paul*, &c. But too many (we may fear) make it the ground, and foundation, and therein miserably deceive themselves. For 'tis Faith alone receiving Christ, as he is freely offer'd, that gives us all our interest in God, as it disclaims all Self-righteousness, and Creature-confidence, and gives God all the glory of our Salvation, by his rich Grace. For our good Works (whatever they are) they are no part of our Righteousness before God, but only our evidences, that we have Believed, as God hath Commanded; and so are in the only right way to our everlasting Salvation, as we hope for it in Heaven. But this is a Mystery far above thy reach, *viz.* To do all, as if thou must be saved by thy Works; and yet when all is done, to look on all, as abominable before God, and to rest thy self, and all thy Works, upon Gods free Grace in our Lord Jesus Christ for Acceptance, as much as if thou had'st done nothing at all. Thou reckon'st upon Works of Piety, Mercy, and Charity, which thou hast done; not considering, that thou hast somewhat even in them to be pardon'd, and that no Satisfaction to Gods Justice can be made by any thing, never so well done, by any Creature, or by all of them together.

Neh. 13. 14. & 31. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

If any shall think I wrong them in this, I confess (what I hope, and believe) that there are many sound, and sincere Believers, who are really acquainted with the Mysterie of Living by Faith. But I have not Charity enough, to perswade my self, that all Professing Christians are

ſuch, as know by experience, what it is to live by Faith in the Righteouſneſs of the alone Saviour, whiles they ſee nothing in themſelves, but juſt matter of Condemnation: Once, for certain, to deny our own Righteouſneſs, is the hardeſt part of Self-denial, and every experienc'd Chriſtian, will (I am confident) be ready to avow this.

But too many, that profeſs Faith in Chriſt, are too like the *Jews*, who made great account of Sacrifices, and Offerings; not underſtanding, or heeding Chriſt in them, though he was the Life, and Soul of them, and without him, they were but an empty ſhadow, or an unſavoury Carcaſs, indeed an Abomination. What adoe is made by many about the Sacraments, to be applyed to young, and old; as if the *opus operatum* in Gods Ordinances, were of ſuch avail, where, there is no Grace concurring with them? The Sacraments are indeed Neceſſary, by reaſon of Gods Command, and as means of his appointment, for our edification in Grace, and Communion with God. They are the Seals which God hath annex'd to the New Covenant; and the contempt, or neglect of them, when they may be us'd, and applyed in Gods way, and order, is no ſmall tranſgreſſion. Nor can we juſtly expect the End, ſo long as we neglect the Means, which God hath appointed for obtaining it. But yet there is not ſuch a neceſſity of the Sacraments, as of Chriſt, and Faith in him; and we may have, and hold faſt theſe, without the Sacraments; elſe woe to thoſe poor Souls, who by the hand of God one way, or other in any kind, are debarr'd the

Neceſſitate Præcepti, Medii.

the use of them. 'Tis more than probable, that many children died in *Israel*, before they were circumcised, which was not, by Gods order, till the eighth day: And yet we dare not therefore say, they were cast-awayes. The Passover was probably, in some of the Kings reigns, utterly neglected, (or else observ'd only in private, if yet it was so) as in *Ahaz* his time: For *he shut up the doors of the Lords house*, which so stood shut, till *Hezekiah opened them, in the first year of his reign*. And how could the *Jews* in *Babylon* keep the Passover, or offer any Sacrifice, for 70. years together? And yet who dare say, that the faithfull and godly among them, all that while, had no communion with God? Was not the Ark in a private place, so as the people enquir'd not at it, in the dayes of *Saul*, 1 *Chron.* 13. 3. True; the want of Ordinances duly administred, in the publique Assemblies, is a sad calamity, and a token of Gods displeasure against a people. But yet God never leaves his people, without sufficient helps, to acquaint themselves with him, in such a sad condition; and there is no such necessity of them, as enforces any to an undue and disorderly administration of them, besides the rule of that Word and Law, which hath enjoyn'd them. We had need beware of giving to them, what we owe to Christ alone, and faith in his name, lest we be guilty of seeking after righteousnes, as it were, by the works of the Law, *Ro.* 9. 32.

2 Chron. 28. 24. 2 Chron. 29. 3. Ezech. 11. 16.

What adoe is made also, by too many, about duties of worship, when it is to be fear'd, their Religion goes very little further, and there is lit-

tle care of improving the Word and Prayer to any other purpose, after attendance on them is once at an end. The Word is precious, and so are all duties of worship, to all such as know by experience the blessed effects of them upon their own Souls. But 'tis an easie mistake for men to rest in the duty done, and think all is well, if they have been at it, though little be done after it, to express the vertue and power of it, or to shew any impressions of it on the Soul. There are other duties to be done of all Christians, to shew the life and power of godliness in them, and if these latter be wanting, all attendance on Ordinances will be little other than an empty outside Formality.

The same may be said of Family-duties, Morning and Evening daily perform'd, if there be not a conscionable performance of the moral Law in justice, fidelity, mercy and charity, us'd and practic'd in all our dealings with men. And when we have done all, both the one and other, yet Christ, and his righteousness, are all in all to us, and the rest no better than a filthy ragg. But of this more in the next that follows.

Secondly, A second Mistake seems to lye as much on the other hand, *viz.* When men count of being sav'd by faith and hope in Christ alone, and live all the while in a constant practice of all ungodliness and unrighteousness, which is *to turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into wantonness or lasciviousness*, Jude 4. Such were the *Jews* of old, that cried, *The Temple of the Lord*, &c. *Jer.* 7.4. And yet continued *to steal, murder, and commit*

mit adultery, and ſwear falſely, &c. *v.* 9. And what account God had of them, is to be ſeen at large, *Eſay* 1 *cap.* 10.–16. *v. Eſay* 66. 1.–5. *Pſal.* 50. and many other places to the ſame purpoſe. The ſumm of all is this, That they, and all their ſervices, were an abomination to the Lord. And ſo is the faith of all prophane and ungodly men, who profeſs their hope in Chriſt alone, to be ſaved by him. Such faith as Saint *James* ſaith, *cap.* 2. *is dead*, having no works to prove and juſtifie the life and power of it. *The Devils believe, and tremble*, which theſe pro- Jac. 2. 19.
phane wretches do not. And ſhall their Faith ſave them? Juſt as the Devil's faith ſhall ſave him, and no otherwiſe. Theſe are the believers, that have ſo much faith, as carries them to the places of publique worſhip, where perhaps they ſometime laugh, or ſleep out the time, as if they had nought elſe to do there. And what is done there by their Miniſters, ſomewhat, or nothing, or ſomewhat to no purpoſe, with them, it matters not. The worſe, and the leſs, the better. As for heeding what they hear, or practicing as they have prayed, (Alas poor Souls) they regard little more than the doggs, that goe to Church on *Sundayes* ſometimes, as well as their Maſters. Theſe are believers, that live in all manner of ſenſual delights and pleaſures, and make no conſcience, no not ſo much as Heathens, of any thing that ſavours of common honeſty. But becauſe this hath been touch'd upon before by the way, I ſhall ſay no more of it here. Only theſe men, all of them, are out of the way of life, which is *believing with all the heart*; and what believing Ro. 10. 9, 10.

with all the heart is, I ſhall yet ſhew as plainly, and as briefly as I can.

When once a poor Sinner is convinc'd of the errour and evil of his way, and alſo of the infinite tranſcendent excellencies of Chriſt, as all in all to him, he then ſees, there is ſomewhat hereafter to be expected, more than can poſſibly be had here. And thereupon he is wholly and altogether taken up in his thoughts and affections, about thoſe things which are laid up in Chriſt, and never to be enjoyed, till his appearing in glory. This hope and expectation of future glory, ſo works upon him, as he becomes every day more and more crucified to the World, and all things here below, and accounts them (as they are indeed) nothing but vanities and lyes. And as all his hopes are in Heaven, ſo all his endeavours are only for this, that he may not fail & fall ſhort of thoſe everlaſting enjoyments. And accordingly he reſolves, that whatever it coſts him in doing or ſuffering for Chriſts ſake, come life, come death, he cares not, ſo he may have his deſires in theſe. In this way of believing, all the Saints now in Heaven came thither. No temptation on the right hand, or the left, could turn them aſide, but they would ſtill hold on in the way of Gods Commandments, whatever became of them. So did *Moſes*, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25, 26. *Who refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God*, &c. Not as *Elihu* charged *Job*, Job 36. 21. *That he had choſen iniquity, rather than affliction.* But as *Zuinglius* hath it, * *What deaths had we not better chuſe, what torments, yea, what*

* *Quas non oportet mortes præeligere, &c.* Zuingl. Ep 3.

what Hell not ſuffer rather, than go againſt Conſcience rightly inform'd? So did all thoſe Worthies, recorded *Heb.* 11. 33. *ad fin.* Theſe are the Saints indeed, that take Heaven by violence; and they that are not ſuch, at leaſt in the purpoſe of their hearts, will never approve themſelves in Gods account, to be found Believers. I know well, there are many Sects in the World, but all thoſe are but of two ſorts, and no more will be found at the laſt day. One of theſe is that company of men, which will have their reward here, and their portion in this life. It is all they look after, and the beſt Heaven they deſire, is to be left here upon Earth for ever; and to theſe, the thoughts of Death are very terrible. But there is another ſort, who count this Earth to be their Hell; and all their Expectation and Hope is after they are gone hence; and upon this account, they little value what befalls them here. And theſe are Chriſtians, and Believers indeed: *Their Faith is the ground of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*: It is ſuch a confidence of the Heavenly Inheritance, as makes a man fear nothing; *Having his eye upon the recompence of the reward, and as ſeeing him that is inviſible.* Such Believers will not be frighted, nor flatter'd out of Gods wayes, becauſe they know them to be the only way to Life eternal. Canſt thou do thus, and for the Joy ſet before thee endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame? If thou canſt, this is a ſound Faith indeed, that will get thee a Living, and that for ever.

Præparatione animi.

Heb. 11. 1.

Heb. 11. 26, 27.

Obj. If any object, That ſome good men have been afraid, and yielded in ſuffering times.

Sol.

Sol. I say so too: But I say withall, that never any good man did wholly, and finally deny, and forsake the cause of Truth, for any Torments, and Sufferings, and for those who staggered a while, and perhaps recoil'd, they came on again, and found no comfort, till they had recanted their Recantations. All may not have the same degree of confidence and courage; but all sound Believers will hold out to the end, though some with more adoe, than others. It cannot be a sound Faith, that can be totally overcome by any Temptation. To believe sincerely, is the work of Christ, in a Soul; and, *He is stronger than he that is in the World*, 1 Joh. 4. 4. so as true Believers are sure at last, to overcome, whatever be their conflict. But thou art one, that carest not for fighting, or striving against Sin, with the least hazard, to any of thy smallest Earthly comforts. Thou art more like those Souldiers that watch'd our Saviour whiles he lay in the Tomb, *Mat.* 28. 11. *&c.* who though they knew, that he was Risen, as they had seen, and could not but know it; yet *vers.* 15. *Took the money*, that was offer'd them, and *said as they were taught*, i. e. quite contrary, to what they knew in their Consciences. If there be any thing to be got, Money, or Money-worth, thou wilt deny Christ, and his Truth, or any thing thou know'st of God. Or if any thing be to be suffer'd for the Truth, let it go for thee, 'tis not worth the purchase. I shall say no more to discover, who are sound Believers, and who not.

I shall only add a word of Advice to such as profess their Faith, and hope to be saved by Christ;

Christ; but for certain, never yet gave any proof of it: because of this sort are many, that quarrel the wayes of Gods Grace, and Providence, as not equal.

1. Know O vain man, that God hath promised thee Eternal life, as much as any other; and there is no hinderance to thy enjoyment of it, but thine impenitency, and unbelief; and what that is, hath been plainly shew'd before. There is, I say again, no barre to thy Believing, unto the saving of thy Soul, but what thou thy self hast put, by thy wilfull and wayward rejecting of Christ, tender'd to thee. Consider it therefore, and look to it in time, for thine Eternity depends upon it.

2. Thou hast nothing to do, but to humble thy self before the Lord, and acknowledge thine Iniquities, and loath thy self for them, and so flee to lay hold on the Hope set before thee, *Counting all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the only Lord and Saviour*; and resolve, *To serve him all thy dayes, in holiness, and righteousness before him.* If this be done, thou shalt be Saved, and shalt never meet with any Decree of God, to reject thee. And for the Merits of Christ, thou shalt finde them as all-sufficient to thee, as to any Saint in Heaven. And now say not, thou would'st believe, if thou could'st; for the contrary is most true, as hath been proved before. O! be at last perswaded, to quarrel no more, about what will avail thee nothing, but presently set about the work, that lieth plain before thee.

Phil. 3. 8.

Luc. 1.74.

If thou wilt know what, I say again;

1. Love

1. Love thy Sinnes no more, count not the profits, and pleaſures of them, to be ſo ſweet, when they will be bitterneſs in the latter end. For they are but well-taſted Poyſon, that goes down ſweetly, but works ſadly in the Bowels afterward. This Poyſon indeed, is in thee already; but it will not kill thee, if thou art perſwaded to caſt it up. And this I give thee to encourage thee, That I know ſome Sinners yet alive, that have taken in as much Poyſon as thou haſt, who, by caſting it up, as I have now perſwaded thee, have much ſweet peace, and comfort in Believing, whiles they tread another trace, than once they did. They are now Holy, Devout, and Righteous; who were before Ungodly, Profane, and Vicious. Go thou, and do likewiſe, and try, whether God will ſave thee, or no.

2. Lay hold on the wayes of Gods Commandments, and *Write them upon the table of thine heart*, Prov. 3. 3. were thou may'ſt read more to this purpoſe; as alſo *Prov.* 1. 5. beſides many, very many places of Scripture, which all cry loud upon thee, to hearken, and hear what God requireth of thee, to the ſaving of thy Soul. Be but once perſwaded to Believe, that God knows the way to Heaven, better than thou doſt, and that he hath told thee plainly enough what that way is. And then conſider, whether God hath, or can have it in his heart, to abuſe, and deceive thee. Yea, to put no further trouble upon thee, go to thine own Conſcience, and ask ſeriouſly, whether the wayes of ſinfull Vanity, and all manner

ner of Iniquity are, or can be the way to Heavenly happineſs, in the enjoyment of God.

And for a Concluſion; be pleas'd to conſider of all that hath been aforeſaid, whether thou haſt nothing to do, about the work and buſineſs of thine own Salvation. For one of theſe two muſt be: Either thou haſt ſomething to do, or nothing at all. If there be ſomewhat for thee to do, (as I ſuppoſe there is) why art thou not about it, and hard at it, and that preſently, without delay? Canſt thou be ſo unreaſonably negligent about thy Soul, when thou art ſo unceſſantly, and exceſſively carefull of every other, the leaſt concernment? Is it nothing to thee, what becomes of thee to all Eternity? Hath God will'd thee to be doing, all thou canſt, for thy preſent Subſiſtence, and nothing at all for thy everlaſting Salvation? Or hath he left it to thy Choice, whether thou wilt do any thing, or nothing at all? Read the Scriptures once more, and ſee, if there be nothing commanded thee in order to this? And be ſure in the firſt place, that thou art left to thy liberty, and under no obligation; or elſe conſider, how thou wilt anſwer for thy diſobedience to Gods Commands.

But if there be nothing for thee to do, or if it be in vain for thee, to beſtow thy care, or pains about it, becauſe there is ſomewhat impoſſible to be done, without any

any fault of thine; I shall say no more, but leave thee to be tryed by what thou know'st to be Gods Law, at the last, and great day of Account; resolving for my self, that if I am saved from Wrath, and Death, it will be only through Gods free Mercy, and Grace; and if I perish, and die in my Sinnes, it will be only through mine own default, because I would not (whil'st I might,) know the time of my Visitation, and the things of my Peace.

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APPENDIX

To the whole *Diſcourſe* foregoing, which may be call'd a Seal, ſet to the only way of Life and Salvation, by the alone Saviour.

Luc 13. 23, 24, &c.

Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, Are there few that be ſaved? And he ſaid unto him, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, &c.

HE that made this Queſtion, ſeems to be (upon what occaſion ſoever he made it) of a curious and inquiſitive humour, (as moſt men are) deſirous to know, what no way concern'd him. He would be ſatisfied, Whether few or many ſhall be ſaved. Our Saviour in anſwering him, ſufficiently ſhews his diſlike of ſuch an impertinent Queſtion: For he reſolves nothing about it directly, but clearly intimates to him and others, that it concerns them not to be reſolv'd in it, one way or other: But falls upon that, which every man is bound to look after, viz. A carefull endeavour to do the will of God, re-

reveal'd in his Word, which ſhews the way of life; ſo as whoever walks in it, is ſure to be ſaved.

Now this one Scripture is enough, to ſtop the mouths of all, that quarrel and queſtion (as many do) the wayes of God in his Decrees and Counſels about the Salvation of men. For our Saviour not only intimates, that all ſuch Queſtions are impertinent; but he fully ſhews, upon this occaſion, what is the only way to Life, wherein whoever goes, is ſure to be ſaved, whatever becomes of others: And never takes the leaſt notice of any barr, by reaſon of Gods Decrees, or any thing elſe of that kind.

We muſt ſtrive, &c. *i.e.* We muſt not think the Kingdom of Heaven can be gotten by a lazy and empty profeſſion of true Religion, or by having the external means of grace, and the outſide priviledges of Chriſtians, (as 'tis ſaid) *v.* 26. But we muſt ſtrive for it, by ſound deniall of our ſelves, renouncing all worldly and fleſhly delights and contents, and a ſerious induſtrious endeavour after godlineſs, which will put us to hard labour, and pain, and trouble. And then he makes Affidavit for it, That whoever is reſolv'd to ſeek Heaven and Happineſs in this way, ſhall not miſs, or fall ſhort. Goe thou, and do thus, and thy Work is done, if God be true in his Word.

FINIS.